

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



3 1761 01881963 1

E. F. Murray

TRANSFERRED

LIBRARY



FAMILIAR INSTRUCTIONS

AND

EVENING LECTURES.

FAMILIAR INSTRUCTIONS

AND

EVENING LECTURES

ON

ALL THE TRUTHS OF RELIGION.

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE SÉGUR.

Translated from the French.

VOL. II.

LONDON: BURNS & OATES, LIMITED.

NOV 26 1958

CONTENTS.



THIRD PART—*continued.*

	PAGE
The First and Second Commandments of the Church . . .	1
The Third Commandment of the Church	3
Lent	5
The Fourth and Fifth Commandments of the Church . . .	7
U Easter Communion	9
The Enigma of Life	12
The Secret of Happiness	14
Pleasure and Happiness	16
To those who Suffer	18
What have I done that God should send me so much suffering?	20
On Patience in Sickness	22
Compensations	24
In what True Happiness Consists	26
Little Virtues	28
Meekness	29
Humility	32
“Blessed are the Poor in Spirit”	35

FOURTH PART.

	PAGE
The Sign of the Cross	38
On Reverence for the Sign of the Cross	40
The Pater Noster	41
The Ave Maria	48
The Credo	53
The Confiteor	55
✓ The Rosary	58
✓ The Mass	60
The Ceremonies of the Church	63
The Churches	65
The Altars and Sacred Vessels	67
The Sacred Vestments	69
Ceremonies of the Mass (from Commencement to Epistle)	72
,, ,, (from Epistle to Canon)	75
,, ,, (from Canon to the End)	77
The Ceremonies of High Mass	80
The Gloria in Excelsis	83
Vespers and Benedictions	85
The Psalms	89
The Dixit Dominus	9
Laudate, Pueri, Dominum	97
The De Profundis	100
The Magnificat	102
The Lamps of the Blessed Sacrament	108
Indulgences and Jubilees	110
✓ The Scapular	112
The Third Order of St. Francis	114

FIFTH PART.

	PAGE
The Resurrection of Lazarus	121
The Blind Man of Jericho	123
The Man Born Blind	126
The Risen Jesus and Mary Magdalen	129
Zacheus	131
The Repentance of Magdalen	132
The Widow's Mite	135
The Father of a Family	137
The Prodigal Son	139
The Field and the Good Seed	143
The Parable of the Samaritan	145
Lazarus and the Rich Man	147
St. Peter Delivered by the Angel	150
Miraculous Conversion of St. Paul	151

SIXTH PART.

Pierre the Apprentice	155
Conversion and Death of a Young Protestant	159
The Regeneration of a Parish	165
Execution of the Carabineer Guth	168
Tel est pris qui Croyait Prendre	171
General Cambronne	174
The Old Beggar	177
The Old Man	180
The Caliph, the Shepherd, and Happiness	182
Martyrdom of St. Cecilia, &c.	187
The Catacombs	194

	PAGE
Souvenirs of Rome	197
St. Peter's	204
The Daily Life of the Pope	208
The Pretended Scandals of Rome	211
Two Jubilees	214
The Propagation of the Faith	216
Holy Childhood	218
Association of St. Francis of Sales	221
The Little Savoyards	222
Fénelon and Poor Pierrot	224
A Souvenir	227
Martyrdom of Processus and Martinian	230
The Martyr Geronimo	233
Death of St. Charles Borromeo	236
A Convict's Letter	242
Martyrdom of Venerable Auguste Chapdelaine	246
Martyrdom of Stanislaus Iszora	253
Kind Actions are never Unrewarded	258
A Little Candle to Mary	260
The Little Euchology	262
A Mistake	264
Filial Piety	267
First Communion	269
Have Confidence in Mary	270
Our Lady of Victories	272

FAMILIAR INSTRUCTIONS.

THIRD PART

(Continued).

THE FIRST AND SECOND COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH.

BESIDES the fifty-two Sundays of the year, the Church commands us, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to sanctify certain days which we call Feasts, and which are intended to recall to the memory of Christians the principal mysteries in the life of the Saviour and of His Blessed Mother, the triumphs of the martyrs and the heroic virtues of the Saints. These Feasts are of two kinds, the first, called Feasts of Obligation, impose upon the faithful the obligation of resting from manual labour and assisting at Mass; the others, called Feasts of Devotion, do not necessitate rest from work nor attendance at Mass under pain of sin, but it is right to celebrate them by public prayer, in order to derive from them the spiritual advantages which the Church proposed in their institution. There are in England eight Holidays of Obligation, viz., the Circumcision of our Lord, the Epiphany, St. Peter and St. Paul, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, All-Saints, Christmas Day, Ascension Day, and Corpus Christi. There are other great Feasts which are religiously observed, such as Easter, Pentecost, &c., but as these always fall on Sunday it is not necessary to command that they should be kept holy. As the establishment of

these Feasts is entirely a matter of ecclesiastical discipline, their number may be increased or diminished according to the judgment of the Sovereign Pontiffs. The first commandment of the Church obliges us therefore to sanctify these eight Feasts by resting from servile work ; to disobey the Church of God in an affair of such importance would be a mortal sin, and the Christian who ventures to infringe this command could only be excused by a truly sufficient reason.

By the second general commandment the Church points out to us the principal duty which must serve as the foundation of this salutary sanctification. This duty is the assistance at the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, in which our Lord Jesus Christ deigns to descend into our midst beneath the veils of the Holy Sacrament, and thus to render present to His Church even unto the end of the world the one great Sacrifice of our Redemption. The Mass being the central act of the worship of God upon earth, it is quite natural that the Church should have chosen it as the principal means by which Sundays and Feasts must alike be sanctified.

In order to fulfil this precept, it is also necessary to hear Mass with reverence and attention, from the beginning to the end. Those who through negligence enter the Church after the Gospel do not obey the commandment.

The assistance at Mass every Sunday is the reunion of the great Christian family ; by it they are enabled to render to God the public worship of adoration, thanksgiving, and prayer, which is due to Him ; to remember without ceasing that they are all the children of one father, the members of one body, the faithful of one Church, the soldiers of one army, and the lambs of one fold. It may be affirmed that for the workman especially, who is employed during the whole week in manual labour, the sanctification of the Sunday is the practical summing-up of his religious duties ; and in order to judge of the moral state of a population, it is sufficient to remark in what way the first and second commandments are observed.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT OF THE CHURCH.

To fast is to deprive ourselves of a portion of our usual food, and to be contented with one meal during the day, and a light collation intended to render this penitential practice less difficult.

Fasting is truly a divine institution. From the commencement of the world it has been the first and most important of penitential works, and has been practised and sanctified by patriarchs and prophets, by our Lord and His Apostles, by the martyrs and all the Saints. Its object is to humiliate the flesh and to subdue the passions, but not to injure the strength of the body.

The Church, in imitation of her Divine Master, and by command of the Apostles, has chosen fasting as the means by which her children shall practise Christian penance; all are bound to fast (who have reached the age of twenty-one) during the forty days which precede Easter Sunday, on the Vigils of great Feasts, and at those four seasons of the year called Ember Days, which introduce into each of the four seasons three days of penance and sanctification. The particular observances of fasting vary in different countries and dioceses. As this holy practice is as much a work of obedience as of mortification, the only general rule which can be given, is that all must observe it as directed by the Bishop of the diocese in which they live. The spirit is ever the same, though the details vary.

No one is obliged to fast before the age of twenty-one, because, until then, the constitution is not completely developed, and insufficient food might affect the health. The reasons which exempt from fasting are—1st, physical weakness or sickness; 2d, poverty, which prevents a man from being able to choose his food, and obliges him to eat just what he can procure, whenever he can procure it, 3d, the moral impossibility which arises from hard and difficult work, from extreme fatigue, and lastly, from other circumstances of which the confessor is the only good judge, and in fact all these reasons must, for greater safety, be submitted to him. The gravity of any infraction of this commandment arises especially from the disobedience it involves to a public and most important regulation of the

Church of God. It is to despise the public penance of the Church, and to despise the evangelical precept, "Except ye do penance ye shall all likewise perish!"

Sunday is never a fasting day, because it is the Lord's Day; this is why Lent, which includes six Sundays, begins forty-six days before Easter instead of forty. The Vigils upon which fasting is commanded are the Eves of Whitsunday, of St. Peter and St. Paul, of the Assumption, All Saints, and Christmas Day. The obligation of abstaining from flesh meat on Fridays is also a very important religious law, and is similarly distinguished by the character of a public and general penance. We sanctify the week and prepare ourselves for Sunday by this bodily mortification in remembrance of the passion of our Lord. Any violation of the law of abstinence is also a mortal sin.

And if any one should say, "That which enters into the body cannot defile the soul," or, "God does not regard the food we eat," let them, I say, clearly understand that this has nothing whatever to do with it; it is not a question of eating meat, but wholly one of obedience. However indifferent God may be as to our choice of food, He is far from indifferent as to our dispositions of obedience or rebellion; and He has not only given us a general command to do penance, but has also commanded us to obey the Church in all the regulations she may make with regard to this holy and necessary practice. The reasons required for an exemption from the law of abstinence are the same as for a dispensation from fasting. But upon this point let no one deceive themselves, it is impossible to deceive God; we should always consult the confessor who is charged with our spiritual welfare, and should also remember that it is a mortal sin not to abstain except for a truly sufficient reason.

Let the indifferent, the sinful, and the incredulous all regard us with contempt, as men who follow shadows and are weakly intent upon trifles. Is it a trifle to obey God and His Church? Is it weakness to honour the words spoken by Jesus Christ to the pastors of His Church?—"Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature; HE THAT HEARETH YOU HEARETH ME, AND HE THAT DESPISETH YOU DESPISETH ME!"

L E N T.

AH! this is quite a melancholy subject, and you would prefer that it should not be forced upon your attention. It is unpleasant enough when Lent comes, and in the meantime the less said about it the better. Ever unwelcome is this holy season, and all, with the exception of a few fervent Christians, appear to regard the forty days with a feeling of vexation which almost amounts to resentment.

But with our forefathers it was not so. Full of faith, they drew from their firm belief powerful motives for energy, perseverance, and goodwill. They rightly estimated duty; they recognised its grandeur; and they placed the sacred laws of God and of His Church far above the vain pretexts to which our self-indulgence so often sacrifices them.

Our forefathers observed in every detail the commands of the Church with regard to fasting and abstinence; every one abstained on Fridays and Saturdays. Men did not study themselves and PAMPER themselves as they do now; this may be proved by the fact that at Paris in the fifteenth century, in spite of a population of hundreds of thousands of inhabitants, only one butcher sold meat during Lent, and supplied all that was required by killing a single ox a day. They fasted the whole of Lent, and no one died from the effects. Neither did they suffer, for populations were far more flourishing, and men taller and stronger than now. "*But can it be,*" you say, "*that God requires bodily mortification instead of heartfelt repentance?*" To which we answer simply that God requires both, because heartfelt repentance is ever united to bodily mortification. The soul influences the body, and the body reacts upon the soul, because of their intimate union; a body that is indulged will sooner or later impart its own feebleness to the soul its constant companion; and a soul pure and upright and victorious over its passions, will necessarily hold the ~~soul~~ in perfect discipline and subjection. The body, from the fatal results of original sin, is in constant rebellion against the soul; and the soul must therefore treat it almost as an enemy, and be ever on its guard against it, in order to insure its own independence, its fidelity to God, and its eternal salvation.

body

But why should such a disagreeable means of doing penance be chosen? And why should it not be chosen? The Church has chosen it—1st. Because it is sufficiently disagreeable to constitute a penance, and not too hard to be practised by all Christians. 2d. Out of reverence for the Apostles who instituted Lent. 3d. Because such is her will, and we must all, without any exception, respect her choice and submit to her commandment.

To obey the laws of the Church is to obey Jesus Christ; to violate her laws, is to neglect them, to regard them as trifles, is to despise, to neglect, and to disobey Jesus Christ. Is this a little fault?

I desire to obey God rather than men, and the Pope and the Bishops are men. Yes, but men vested with Divine authority, so that it is God Himself who speaks, commands, instructs, sanctifies, forbids, and governs by the lips of those whom He has sent.

And shall God condemn me for a little meat? No; but for the disobedience, which is all the more guilty in proportion as the law imposed is simple and easy to fulfil. Is it not utter folly to offend God for such a little thing? A man who *could* have fasted and abstained, yet would not, shall stand without excuse before the tribunal of his God.

But I cannot fast or abstain; it makes me ill. Is that quite true? Remember that it is God who must judge. If your health is really too weak, the law is not for you; the Church desires to make us do penance, and not to make us ill; she desires to deprive us of superfluous, but not of *necessary*, food; but, as regards what is *necessary*, make no mistake: consult your doctor, and still more your confessor; he is the doctor of the Divine law, and is gifted with grace to make it clear.

Those who have very hard work, or are extremely poor, may always obtain a dispensation, since no one can live without sufficient food.

But it is exceedingly tiresome and disagreeable to fast!

And this last and most feeble excuse is generally at the root of the whole matter, and should be urged first instead of last. "It is unpleasant to fulfil my duty, and therefore I will not fulfil it." Be it so; but I warn you; make ready to travel on the road to hell, for your face is turned in that direction. Whoever fails to fulfil his duty lives in sin; and he who lives in sin shall receive, as an inevitable

consequence, that eternal punishment of which our Lord speaks so often in the Gospel, warning us to avoid at any price its inconceivable pain !

For my own part, I find it less difficult to keep the Lenten fast year after year, and to abstain on Friday, than to suffer for ever in hell.

Every one is free to choose.

THE FOURTH AND FIFTH COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ instituted confession in order to make repentance easier for our weak human nature, and to assure us of the pardon of our sins. He laid down no rule as to the times and seasons at which sinners might have recourse to this sacrament of mercy ; it was to be an ever-open and inexhaustible source from which we might incessantly obtain not only pardon, but peace of heart and purity of conscience.

In the first century of the Church, Christians had recourse to the sacrament of penance only when they had committed some serious fault, and not at fixed and periodical times. The early Christians had few grievous falls with which to reproach themselves : they prayed constantly, kept the days of fasting and abstinence, and all holy vigils with the utmost care and devotion, meditated incessantly on the Word of God, and went to Communion every day. It may be easily understood that, to those who lived such lives, confession was not as necessary as to the tepid Christians of the present day.

But, when the barbarous nations in great numbers received the light of faith, certain negligences gradually crept into the practices of religion, resulting from the ignorance of these new children of the Church, and from the uncultured condition of their consciences. This reached to such an extent that, in some countries, the service of God was so greatly neglected that people lived almost without the sacraments, or at least allowed long periods of time to pass without receiving them. In order to remedy this abuse, Pope Innocent III., at the General Lateran Council, held at Rome in 1215, decreed that henceforth all Christians

having reached the age of reason should be bound, under pain of mortal sin, of grave disobedience, and excommunication, to present themselves to the priest and confess their sins *at least* once a year. Those who should dare to disobey this commandment should be excluded from the great Catholic family, deprived of the public prayers and of permission to assist at the sacred offices of the Church, and, finally, if they persevered in this state until death, should be denied Christian burial. The Lateran Council did not, as has been falsely asserted, *invent* confession, but simply laid down a rule with regard to it, by commanding that all should confess *at least once a year*.

The time of the year at which this precept must be fulfilled has never been determined ; but as confession is the natural preparation for the Easter Communion, the Paschal season is that generally chosen.

We will not add anything here to defend confession against the calumny and blasphemy of those who need it most, besides the fact that there is not one out of a hundred who believes a word of all these foolish accusations. We are now only speaking of confession as commanded by the Church, and believe that sufficient has been said to make the nature and bearing of the Fourth Commandment clear.

The Lateran Council next laid down a law with regard to the sacrament of Holy Eucharist. It commanded that every Christian who had made his first communion should receive the blessed sacrament at least once a year, and that at Easter or thereabouts.

The Easter Communion is not only a work of piety, it is, besides, a kind of public protestation of the Catholic faith. The Church calls all her children to the foot of her holy altars ; she invites them to the Divine banquet of the Eucharist, and fixes upon the festival of Easter for this great reunion. Whoever fails wilfully to answer to her call, excludes himself from the Christian family, and excommunicates himself. He participates no longer in the spiritual possessions and benedictions of the Church, and, as a heathen, he is buried if he persevere in this voluntary excommunication.

It is a grievous sin not to fulfil the Easter duties ; it is an open separation from the Church of God. If you had been so unhappy as to fail in such an important duty, you would be bound to repent without delay ; to prepare your-

self, by sincere contrition and a fervent confession, to atone for your negligence and to approach worthily to the sacrament of Holy Eucharist. Even if the Paschal season should be past, you would still be under the obligation to communicate "at least once a year," and in such a case we can only apply the popular dictum, "Better late than never."

Because the Church commands us to communicate at least once a year, some have illogically concluded that it is not necessary to communicate more often. This is a great error, and shows an utter ignorance of the things of God. The Easter Communion is chiefly a Catholic manifestation; the other communions which we make during the year have not this character; their principal object is to fortify us against the attacks of the devil, and to strengthen within us that life of grace which is the sanctifying union of our souls with our Creator and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Every Christian who seriously desires to labour for his own eternal salvation, approaches *often* to the Holy Communion, not only to obey the command of the Church, but to cooperate in the merciful designs of God, who gives Himself to us in the blessed sacrament, and sustains us thus in Christian holiness throughout our earthly pilgrimage.

THE EASTER COMMUNION.

WE shall not speak here of the real presence of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist. We have already discussed this great subject. But if ever a doubt with regard to it should arise in our minds, let it be sufficient for us to remember that the Son of God Himself has said, "*He who believeth in Me hath everlasting life.*" "*Take and eat; THIS IS MY BODY. Drink ye all of this; THIS IS MY BLOOD.*" These words alone are sufficient to disperse every shadow of doubt. But why does Jesus Christ come thus in the Holy Eucharist? Why does He descend upon our altars? Why does He travel thus divinely from heaven to earth? For one reason only. The Son of God, our Saviour, comes to take possession of a sanctuary—of a temple a thousand times more beautiful, a thousand times more worthy of Him, than the Temple at Jerusalem. And what can this temple be? It is your heart—your soul. Such is the

temple that God has chosen. It is there He desires to descend ; it is there that He loves to repose. What value after all, in His most holy sight, have those tabernacles and sacred vases in which He is sheltered by our faith and love? He is the living God ; and these temples, these ciboriums, these altars—what are *they* but metal and stone? What He desires is a temple, living even as He lives, capable of being enlightened with His light, which is the spiritual and invisible light of truth, capable of being enkindled with the sacred flame, which is no visible fire, but the spiritual and immaterial fire of love. Such are the worshippers that God desires, worshippers in spirit and in truth, as He has said in the holy Gospel ; therefore reasonable creatures, capable of knowing and loving Him and of entering into participation with His divine life.

Jesus Christ comes, therefore, in the Holy Eucharist to make our souls and bodies the living sanctuaries of God. But in order to correspond to this inestimable benefit there are, on our part, two things necessary : 1st. We must communicate ; 2d. We must communicate well.

2d. *We must communicate.* Without this the design of God is made of no effect. It is for us that our dear Lord is present there ; it is not for Himself, for He has need of nothing, and is infinitely happy ; but it is out of pure mercy and compassion for us.

There is also the *obligation under pain of mortal sin* to communicate at least once a year, and that at Easter. This is what we call our Easter duties ; and just as the festival of the Pasch formerly united the Jews of one common family year by year at the same religious banquet, even so among Christians, who are the true people of God, the great Paschal solemnity, in which the Church celebrates the mysteries of the passion, death, and triumphant resurrection of the Saviour, should gather together all the members of the Catholic family around the sacred banquet of the Holy Eucharist.

Therefore whoever fails to fulfil his Easter duties commits a grievous sin ; and if he persevere in this state of spiritual death, runs a great risk of losing the faith, or falling into hardness of heart and final impenitence, and lastly, of becoming, throughout all eternity, the prey of the second death, by being for ever separated from God in the terrible flames of hell.

2d. It is also necessary to *communicate well*.

To communicate well is to receive Jesus Christ present in the Holy Eucharist, with a pure conscience, a sincere desire, and a firm resolution of being henceforth faithful to God, by the assistance of His grace.

To make a bad communion is to receive the Blessed Sacrament into a soul defiled with mortal sin, and without the firm resolve of being for the future God's true and faithful servant.

To make a good communion is to perform the holiest actions, and the greatest of all the good works possible to man in this world. To make a bad communion is the greatest sin by which man can offend his Saviour and his God. To make a good communion is to receive joy and consolation, peace of heart and conscience, the warrant of final perseverance and of everlasting life. To make a bad communion is to draw down upon oneself both judgment and condemnation, to sign with one's own hand the sentence of eternal woe; to renew the crime of Judas, and to provoke the malediction of the sacrilegious.

Therefore go to communion, but communicate well. You are placed between three alternatives: 1st, to make a good communion; 2d, to make a bad communion; 3d, not to go to communion at all.

And to make a bad communion is almost the same as not to communicate at all, for it is to kill the soul. To die because we do not eat is almost the same thing as to die because we have swallowed poison. The result is the same—death.

Of these three roads two lead to hell, one only leads to heaven. Therefore choose. Communicate at Easter; but in order rightly to fulfil this great and holy duty, prepare yourself by prayer, by spiritual reading, and by good works as far as you are able. Go to confession some time before, especially if you are of the number of those who have delayed. Do all you can, and God will supply the rest. "Peace to men of goodwill."

When you leave the holy altar after having fulfilled your Christian duty you will be perfectly happy, and your soul will be at peace! "Oh! if I had only known how simple it was, and how happy it makes you," said a poor workman who had stayed away from the sacraments for *twenty-nine years*, "I would never have waited so long."

THE ENIGMA OF LIFE.

THERE is a very strange thing in this world, or rather the world itself is a very strange thing. On the one hand we are certain, absolutely certain, that God is infinitely good, infinitely wise, and infinitely powerful; it is no less certain that it is He who created the world, that without Him nothing exists, and that in His infinite goodness He destines all creatures to be happy; how is it, then, that there is so much misery in life? Whence come so many griefs, so many disappointments, so much suffering of body and soul? How is it possible to explain, without reflecting on the sovereign goodness and wisdom of the Creator, the destruction, pestilence, and disease which ravage our provinces, the inundations which desolate country and town, the storms and tempests which bring ruin to so many homes? And, more than all, how can we explain that terrible and inevitable phenomenon which we call death, and which is so repugnant to the deepest instincts of our nature, that the best and holiest of men tremble at its approach, although they know that it opens to them the gates of a blessed eternity? Such is the enigma of which the Christian faith alone can give the solution. It teaches us that God is infinite goodness, eternal life, and perfect order. Nothing evil, nothing disordered, can be the work of His hands. "He has not made death," as He Himself declares in the Holy Scriptures; "life cannot engender death." But from the beginning of the world a twofold revolt, in heaven and on earth, has destroyed the order established by God in all things; and this revolt, which we call sin, is the only cause of the evils which afflict us. This fatal rebellion, begun in heaven, continues upon earth. The most powerful of God's angels, the highest in the heavenly habitations, Lucifer or Satan, refused to render the adoration which God required, and was joined in his rebellion by a number of the heavenly host. They were all cast down from heaven, and on the earth Satan tempts the fidelity of man, and seeks to associate him in his own revolt and in his own damnation.

Adam, our first parent, was indeed created in innocence and happiness; the faithful angels were ever with him in his earthly paradise, and guarded him incessantly from the

fatal influences of Satan ; but notwithstanding this aid, and in the midst of this happiness, Adam remained free to correspond to the love of God, or, on the contrary, to turn away from Him. He succumbed to temptation, transgressed the simple commandment which God had given him, and, by this adhesion to the disobedience of the devil, made his submission to Satan, not only for himself, but for all the human race which should hereafter spring from him.

Hence all our sorrows, and hence all the evils of life. "Thou shalt die," God said to him ; "cursed is the earth to thy work ; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth. In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken, for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return."

Such is the penalty of sin ; such is the sentence of Divine justice ; such is the secret of the sufferings and woes of humanity. We have been delivered into the power of the devil who afflicts us, and we should have no heritage but despair, if the mercy of God, which is infinite as His justice, had not given us a Saviour.

This Saviour is Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who by His incarnation in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, has taken our nature upon Him, and has loved us so much that He has offered Himself to the justice of His Father as the one holy and all-sufficient victim for the rebellion of men. He suffered and died for us, and merited by the sacrifice of the Cross the pardon of our sins ; He has opened to us once more the heaven from which we were excluded, and has instituted upon earth a Church and sacraments by means of which it is easy for every man to be reconciled to God and live a holy life. Jesus came to restore to us eternal life, but each one of us must gain it for himself by triumphing in his own person over that enemy whom Jesus conquered first.

Each one of us, in imitation of his Divine Master, must live united to God by obedience and love, and must patiently endure the trials which are so thickly sprinkled over the path of life.

And thus the Christian, though subject like other men to bodily suffering, to sickness, and to all the evils which result from the fatal power of the devil upon earth, is lifted by his union with Jesus Christ far out of the reach of his

enemy. The terrible darts of Satan, instead of overwhelming the Christian, turn to his glory by giving him day by day new opportunities of conquest. Poverty, suffering, death itself are all transfigured for the disciple of Jesus Christ, and sometimes even the generosity of his love is such that he even welcomes and desires them, in order that he may more perfectly resemble his Saviour.

Such is the solution, too much ignored, alas ! in the present day, of all the evils to which we are subject in the journey of life. Happy the faithful Christian to whom this difficult enigma is revealed, and who in the midst of trials has perfect trust in the divine love and fatherly care which watches over all !

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS.

IN the fourteenth century there lived at Cologne a celebrated preacher named Jean Tauler. He was renowned for his learning and his charity. One day he entered a church, and kneeling down prayed earnestly to God that He would make known to him the way in which he might serve Him best. When his prayer was ended, he went out from the church ; at the door crouching on one of the steps was a poor man scantily covered with rags, and so disfigured that every one who saw him was moved to pity ; he had lost one arm and a leg, and his face and his whole body were covered with frightful wounds. Touched with compassion, Tauler approached him, and taking some money from his purse, said to the poor man, " Good day, my dear friend."—" Thank you, sir," he replied ; " but I have never had a bad day."

Tauler believed that the unfortunate man had misunderstood him : " I wish you a good day," he repeated ; " I wish that you may be happy, and have all that you desire." " I quite understand," replied the beggar, " and I thank you for your charity, good master ; but your wishes were fulfilled for me long ago." The poor fellow has lost his reason, thought Jean Tauler, or perhaps he is deaf, and, raising his voice, he cried, " You do not understand me ; I wish you to be happy."—" Ah, do not be angry, dear master," replied the poor man ; " I understand you very

well, and I tell you again that I am very happy, that I have all I desire, and that all my days are good and happy days."

For an instant Jean Tauler thought he was mad, but there was a tone in his voice which struck him. Therefore he went nearer to him, sat down by his side, and asked him to explain what he meant.

"O God!" exclaimed the poor man earnestly, "it is very simple. I have known from my childhood that God is wise and just and good; from my childhood I have suffered; I have been attacked by a terrible disease, so that my body has wasted away; I have always been poor. . . . I have said to myself: nothing happens but by the will or the permission of God. And God knows better than I do what is good for me. He loves me as a father loves his child. . . . Therefore I am sure that these sufferings are for my greater good. I have also accustomed myself never to will anything but what our dear Lord wills; if He sends me sickness, I welcome it as a friend; if He gives me health, I receive it with joy; if I have nothing to eat, I fast gladly to expiate my sins and those of others; if I have not enough to clothe myself, I think of my Saviour naked in the crib and on the Cross, and I find I am richer far than He; if I suffer on earth, I shall be happier for all eternity. . . . What shall I say to you? I am always contented: if I look miserable, I have a very light heart: I will all that God wills, and nothing that He does not will; I desire nothing but to do His holy will. So you see now, dear master, that I am very happy, that all my days are good days, and that I have all that I desire."

Jean Tauler wept in silence. He had never heard so beautiful a sermon; he gave the poor man his cloak and the only piece of silver he had in his purse, and in spite of the wounds on his face he embraced him with joy. Then he returned to the church, thanking God for having shown him the most perfect way of serving Him.

From that time he became, as far as he could, the disciple and imitator of that poor saint, and he was accustomed to say when reciting this touching adventure, "*Happiness is possible in all conditions; for the poor as well as for the rich; for him who suffers as for him who is in health. Happiness is in the heart, and nowhere else; it depends upon our disposition, and not upon our position in life.*"

Do the will of God, and you will be happy, whatever the outward circumstances by which you are surrounded."

PLEASURE AND HAPPINESS.

THERE is no error which is more pernicious or more prevalent in the present day than the confusion of these two ideas, pleasure and happiness.

Pleasure is the satisfaction of the senses. Happiness is the satisfaction of the heart. Pleasure is material, and is ever more or less sensual ; happiness is of a wholly different nature, it dwells within the soul, and raises man above matter !

There is as much difference and disproportion between pleasure and happiness, as between the body and the soul ; and to confuse these two ideas is to fall into an ignoble and deplorable materialism. Pleasure is the happiness of the beast, of the animal which has no soul, which has only outward instincts, and lives only through the senses.

Man is, it is true, susceptible to pleasure, since he has a body with its senses ; but his vocation lifts him infinitely higher. He has a reasonable soul, capable of knowing the truth, of loving and desiring the good ; he lives on earth only that he may go to heaven, where perfect happiness shall be his everlasting heritage. Therefore our happiness consists, first upon earth, and afterwards in heaven, in the complete repose and full satisfaction of all the faculties of the soul.

And if in this world so few are happy, it is because so few seek happiness there where alone it may be found. The greater part believe that they obtain happiness in the satisfaction of their senses, and the desires of their lower passions, thus confusing pleasure with happiness. In youth especially this error is almost universal, and nothing but the marvellous teaching of the Catholic faith can provide the young with a remedy against this dangerous temptation, and with efficacious means by which they may resist it.

The profligate seeks happiness in the full indulgence of his lower nature, and finding nothing but a sinful pleasure, feels ever in his heart a void—an unknown and unsatisfied

need—which is nothing but the need of that happiness he cannot obtain.

The ambitious man imagines that he will gain happiness if he can only make a name in the world, and rise to a high position, and become a leader amongst men. For this he labours and lives, and in nine cases out of ten he falls far short of success, since worldly honours are somewhat difficult of attainment; and even when, having distanced a host of competitors, he reaches the goal for which he has striven, he finds greatness but a vain delusion, and that pinnacle to which his pride has raised him an utter weariness and a bitter disappointment—and why? Because happiness is not there, and the true needs of the soul are still unsatisfied.

With the miser it is the same. How many men are misers without being conscious of it? Avarice, indeed, does not solely consist in amassing gold and silver, it consists more especially in an engrossing attachment to gold and silver; it is the worship of money, of riches; and this religion has many devotees. These are they who, whatever their calling, put riches in the place of happiness, and, in order to satisfy the heart, endeavour to fill the purse! But they labour in vain; they heap money in vain; the heart cannot, like the purse, be filled with sovereigns. Where, then, is happiness? And how shall we enter into the designs of the great and merciful God who created us to be happy? By leading a pure and Christian life on earth, and thus preparing ourselves for that blessed and eternal rest in which the soul, united to the risen and glorified body, shall enjoy the perfect possession of its last end, even God Himself. Christians alone know here below the secret of true happiness, that happiness which no power on earth can take from them, and which is independent of the vicissitudes of life. God alone, for whom, and in whom, Christians live, can satisfy the deep need of the soul; He alone reserves for Himself, as an inaccessible domain, the depth of the hearts He has created for His glory.

Therefore, if we desire to be happy on earth and in heaven, let us serve Him faithfully, and avoid sin, which is ever the harbinger of misfortune. Let us labour, without ceasing, to fulfil the holy law of God, and thus shall we surely attain the perfect repose of eternal felicity!

TO THOSE WHO SUFFER.

EVERY one has trouble upon earth ; rich and poor, young and old, great and small,—none are exempt from the sad necessity of suffering. To suffer, is our condition in this world. It is the state in which you and I, and our forefathers, have been born, in which our children shall be born, and from which no human effort can deliver us. For ever, and ever, and ever, there will be here below sickness, and trouble, and grief ! there will be for ever widows and orphans ! there will be for ever sorrowful mothers weeping over an empty cradle ! Life, since sin entered into the world, seems to be one long sorrow ; this sorrow may be softened, but it can never be taken away.

Since this is a truth—and who can deny it?—it is very useful to fix our minds often upon those considerations which may help to lighten our troubles, and to render them, if not sweet, at least profitable.

The first of these truths which religion teaches us, and which the simplest reasoning will confirm, is that nothing happens to us here below except by the holy will, or the express permission, of God ; and this is equally true of the evil as of the good.

God is the Lord of the whole earth ; He is the sole and sovereign ruler of the world ; He governs all things, He knows all things ; and not even a hair of our head, as He Himself assures us in the Holy Gospel, can fall without His will. Not a blade of grass springs up in the fields, not a single leaf falls in the forests, not a grain of sand stirs upon the earth, nor a single drop of water in the immensity of the ocean, in storm and in tempest, but the All-powerful God knows it, wills it, and commands it.

If it is thus of the inanimate creation, what must it be for us, the special object of His love ? Our impatience and our murmurs come from our want of faith. Our gaze being ever rooted to the earth, we never lift our hearts on high ; wholly attentive to the *secondary* causes of our troubles, to those events which afflict us, to the little world around us, we fail to mount as high as heaven, and see manifest in all things the perfect will of God. We act like animals which bite the stick and not the hand which strikes them.

In thus afflicting us, God, far from being cruel to us, shows us often the greatest mercy ; for afflictions are most useful to our soul, and, generally, God sends them only for our greater good.

We constantly deceive ourselves in our judgment of things. We look at everything from a point of view which is false, because it is not Christian, and all things appear to us in a wrong light. That which is in reality *good* we call *evil*, and that which is in reality *evil* we call *good*.

What is this life, and how can it be defined, if it is not a *preparation* for our true life, which is the life eternal ? We are not placed on earth simply for our own pleasure and amusement, just to eat, to drink, to sleep, and to follow in all things our own inclinations. . . . We are here to merit, by a faithful fulfilment of the laws of our Creator, the infinite happiness of heaven, to which His goodness destines us, and which, for this reason, can alone satisfy our desires. Therefore, all that brings us nearer to this end must be good and useful. All that prepares for us a greater happiness hereafter must be wholly desirable ; and, on the other hand, all that tends to diminish the happiness of the life to come must be dangerous and evil, and still more dangerous and evil all that may deprive us of that life for ever. There is the reality, there is the truth, the rest is nothing but illusion. By this light, the only true light, everything must be judged.

Hence it is easy to understand that that which is *good* in the eyes of the world (pleasure, gaiety, the abundance of all that can gratify the senses and flatter the pride), being but obstacles to the eternal life which Jesus Christ came to merit for us, are, therefore, inevitable evils, or at least are fraught with danger. And this is why our Lord has cursed them in the Holy Gospel.

On the contrary, privation, suffering, poverty, humiliation, all that the world calls *evil*, is unquestionably a great good, since it draws us nearer God, recalls to us our eternal hopes, and detaches us from every obstacle to our salvation, to our true happiness. And this is also why our Lord repeats so often : Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven ! Blessed are they that weep, blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted ! Behold the promise of perfect happiness, but it can only be realised in heaven ; on earth, happiness is the consolation

of hope, and of a peaceful, patient waiting for the joy that is to come. Therefore, lest our hope should be vain, let us choose the road which leads to paradise, otherwise this *hope* will prove a vain chimera, and we may take in its stead the appalling conviction that misery shall be our endless portion. This road of salvation is the Christian life, is flight from sin and hatred of it, the love of Jesus, prayer, the frequentation of the sacraments of penance and holy Eucharist, all destined by Divine goodness to enable us to advance and to persevere in the right way. Let us be wise, and not abuse the life which God has given; it is a precious treasure, and He lends it only once. Woe to him who misuses it!

Let us be willing to make any sacrifice; let us profit by all our sufferings and sorrows; soon will come the gladness of a perfect repose, and soon the moment of eternal consolation! Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God! Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill! Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted!

WHAT HAVE I DONE THAT GOD SHOULD SEND ME SO MUCH SUFFERING?

THIS is the first thought that arises in the minds of many when grief and suffering come. Instead of asking God for strength to bear their troubles, they begin murmuring against Him. Men of little faith! we might say to them, even as our Lord Jesus Christ said to His doubting disciples. Men of little faith! who understand not the secrets of God! When He visits you with suffering, never ask Him, let me warn you, such a question as this, "What have I done that I should suffer so much?" Ninety-nine times out of a hundred God might silence you by unfolding before your terrified eyes the long and shameful series of your sins, which nothing but your religious indifference could hide from your sight. These sins, so heavy and so multiplied, have a thousand times merited hell with its eternal pains, and yet you dare to complain of the punishment—comparatively so slight—which the justice of God inflicts upon you. And God might *always* answer by showing you the terrible flames

of purgatory. What are the sufferings of the present life when compared with the fearful expiation which awaits us beyond the tomb? Are you so pure that you can face it without trembling? Are you so blind that you cannot perceive that great suffering and long suffering awaits you in purgatory as the penance of your faults? Then is it not entirely for your good that you should suffer in this life? The flames of purgatory are the same as those of hell, the only difference is that they are not eternal. Who can dwell in a devouring fire? And is it not a great blessing to be able to avoid it greatly, if not wholly, by Christian penance, and by suffering, meekly accepted?

Lastly, God could *always* answer by pointing out to you heaven, the crib, and the cross. The journey of life is a fleeting probation. Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh for your salvation, gave you first the example of patience, so that, by a holy use of suffering, you might sanctify your soul, and thus accumulate an eternal weight of glory. Eternity! Eternity! Keep it ever before your eyes, but most especially when tried and tempted. Poverty and its privations, sickness with its constant anguish, even imprisonment with its long and wearisome hours, the loss of those we love,—yea, all the manifold trials of life, are instantly transfigured when the light of eternity rests on them. When you suffer, go to Jesus Christ. He is the Divine consoler. "Come to me," He says to those with sorrow, "Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls." "Amen, Amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice; and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labour, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also you now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you."

Oh! how well they understood these great truths, those saints who supported not only with patience, but with acts of thanksgiving, with rapture and joy, those moral and physical trials which Providence sent them. What solid

happiness, and what wonderful merits, they drew from the trials *we* receive with such affliction. Thus we see a St. Ludovine, fastened to a bed of pain for more than forty consecutive years, preserving such a perfect serenity that it might have been thought she suffered nothing.

Thus St. Louis, King of France, said, when speaking of his captivity in Egypt, where he had endured much from the Saracens, "I rejoice, and I render more thanks to God for the patience which He grants me in my captivity than as if I had conquered the whole world."

St. Elizabeth, Duchess of Thuringia, driven out of her estates, with her four little children, forsaken by every one, and reduced to beggary, went to a convent of Franciscans, to whom she had been formerly a great benefactress, and caused a *Te Deum* to be sung as an act of thanksgiving to God for having granted her the precious favour of suffering for His love.

St. Joseph of Calasanza, celebrated in Italy, said, that work and trouble count for nothing when we have Paradise in view ; and he loved to repeat the words of the Apostle St. Paul, "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us."

Courage, therefore ! Whatever we may be, whether sinful or just, let us understand the adorable mystery of suffering ! It is the visitation of God ; it is the most precious, the most desirable gift of His mercy.

The benefit that I expect is so great, said St. Francis, that it renders all my suffering sweet. Whoever desires to gain heaven, must prepare themselves to suffer.

God found nothing more excellent to bestow upon His only Son Jesus ; upon Mary, His spouse, His mother, His chosen and well-beloved creature ; upon His saints ; upon all His faithful children ! If you suffer with Jesus Christ, you shall be glorified with Him.

It is by the cross we gain the crown.

ON PATIENCE IN SICKNESS.

SICKNESS is the sad heirloom of humanity ; it is man's sorrowful possession during his earthly pilgrimage ; it is the child of sin, and the precursor of that last and

terrible punishment which we call death. It is a partial and anticipated destruction of that guilty flesh which, by the sin of our first parents, has fallen beneath the empire of the devil, and can henceforth only enter heaven after having been purified by the dolorous baptism of death and revived by the resurrection. God, who is infinite goodness and life itself, is not the author of sickness nor of death, even as He is not the author of sin, which is itself the cause of both. "God made not death," say the Holy Scriptures, and it is to the devil, who has "the empire of death," and is the "prince of this world," that all the evils which desolate humanity must be attributed. But if God is not the author of sickness nor of death, He permits both, first as an *expiation*, and afterwards as a *trial*; an *expiation* for sin, and a *trial* for our sanctification. Christian patience is the consoling balm, by means of which both trials and expiation may be happily and peacefully borne, and in this we have only to follow in the footsteps of our Lord and Master, since "He is gone before, carrying His cross."

Patience is necessary to all men, for all men must suffer, but it is especially necessary in sickness and pain, because it alleviates suffering and makes it meritorious. Patience renders us like our Lord, who suffered so much for love of us, and has left us the adorable example of His sweetness and serenity in the midst of suffering. Patience is that Christian disposition of the soul which makes us accept and bear peacefully for the love of God, and in union with Jesus Christ, all the afflictions to which it pleases Divine Providence that we should submit. It is a victory of the spirit over the flesh, of grace over nature, which subdues the revolts of a body rebellious against pain, and causes it to submit to the perfect will of God.

It must not be imagined that patience consists in a certain insensibility to evil and to suffering. If this were the case, patience would have no merit, and suffering would be neither an expiation nor a trial.

It is related in the life of St. Francis of Sales that one day when visiting a poor sick woman, of whose wonderful resignation he had heard much, the great bishop determined to test the reality of this virtue, and to discover if she truly possessed the grace of holy patience. He therefore began to question the sick woman, to praise her tran-

quillity, to exaggerate her sufferings, and to admire her courage and her silence, knowing well that by this means he should discover the real sentiments of her heart. "Alas !" replied the poor woman, "if you could only look into my heart you would cease to praise me. You judge by outward appearances, and I seem to be at peace, but within all is troubled and disturbed. My patience only holds by a thread, and if it were not for God's powerful help, I feel that I should give way to murmurs, complaints, and tears ; but God has put a seal upon my lips so that I dare not complain ; and through His mercy I know the value of the trials which He has sent me." Then the Saint going out from her room, said to those who accompanied him, "This woman has true Christian patience. We should rejoice at her afflictions rather than pity her, for each one of her sufferings is counted before God."

St. Francis himself when he was ill gave a noble example of calmness and resignation. Practising what he had taught to others, he suffered the most acute pain with such patience and sweetness that he was never heard to utter the least complaint, nor to express a single desire which was not conformable to the holy will of God. There was ever written in his face the perfect serenity of a soul triumphant over suffering. He took without any apparent repugnance the most disagreeable medicines, submitted himself entirely to his medical advisers, and was constantly saying that his friends did too much for him. Thus, in sickness as in health, St. Francis followed in the steps of his Divine Master, obeying the command which He himself gave to His apostles and to all Christians :— "I have given you an example, that as I have done so you do also."

COMPENSATIONS.

THERE is a charming little French song, in which an old trooper relates to the children of his native village the story of his life, of his campaigns, of his sorrows and his joys, and the touching recital concludes by these simple and consoling words :—

. . . . " Dans sa bonté profonde,
Dieu, qui créa grands et petits,
Fit du bonheur pour tout le monde :
En vérité, je vous le dis ! "

which might be rendered—

Each human lot is pre-ordained by God ;
 Thus men are born to high or lowly station,
 But *happiness* He hath in love bestowed
 On every creature in His great creation.

Nothing could be more true than this. There is happiness everywhere, even as there is sorrow everywhere. The great goodness of God has indisputable claims which are as absolute as the claims of His justice, but His Divine Providence has with marvellous wisdom provided certain compensations. We are all the children of God ; He sends us all happiness and joy. We are all sinners ; He sends us all suffering, grief, and expiations.

The poor believe that the rich enjoy every comfort, and possess unmingled happiness. They are greatly deceived.

Those who are born to high estate shed quite as many tears as their poorer brethren, and very often more. I remember calling one day on a lady who was extremely rich ; she had a handsome house, a number of servants, and an income of more than £400,000 a year. Do you know what were her first words ? “ You see before you,” she said, “ the most miserable woman in the world ! ” And she began telling me how for many years she had passed her days and nights in weeping, and in a constant struggle against a terrible temptation to despair. She had lost a husband whom she tenderly loved ; her children were engaged in a lawsuit against each other, and her youngest son was dishonouring his name by a life of sinful excess. And yet this unhappy woman had £400,000 a year. It would be easy to mention hundreds of similar cases.

The sufferings of the rich do not resemble those of the poor : they are less material, less palpable ; but they are as bitter, as deep, and as acute. The rich do not suffer from bodily privation, nor from the anguish of hunger and cold, which are indeed terrible sufferings, but they have heart troubles, bodily sickness, and mental grief ; then the education which the rich receive, and the life of luxury and refinement that they lead, tend greatly to increase their sensibility to suffering, and sometimes even to such a degree that a single grief will suffice to destroy the happiness of their lives.

With the poor it is not so : God mercifully softens for

them the troubles which overwhelm the rich. Experience proves it. The principal cross which the workman has to bear is that of bodily want, and the severity of daily labour. Accustomed from childhood to a life of poverty, he preserves a certain simplicity which enables him to find pleasure in simple amusements.

But for the rich man all pleasure has grown monotonous, and amusements have long lost their charm and novelty. For the poor man the least possession is a treasure, the simplest dish a banquet, the simplest enjoyment a real pleasure. This is the divine plan of *compensations*; and it is so perfectly carried out, that after much reflection it is difficult to say whether riches give happiness, or if the state of life which is most to be desired is not after all that humble lowly lot which the Son of God our Saviour chose for Himself, for His holy mother, and for His apostles, when, at the time of His incarnation, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

IN WHAT TRUE HAPPINESS CONSISTS.

ONE of the sweetest pictures which history presents to us is unquestionably the life of St. Francis of Assisi. He lived at the beginning of the thirteenth century. In his lifetime even he was called the Seraphic, and he was indeed rather an angel than a man.

One day, accompanied by one of his faithful friends, Fra Leone (Brother Leo), St. Francis was returning to St. Mary of the Angels, where he lived. It was then winter, and very cold. The Saint had desired his companion to walk on in front of him, so that they could pray to God with greater recollection. Thus they walked on in silence, wholly occupied with Divine things. "Fra Leone," cried St. Francis, "do you know in what perfect happiness consists? If we had all the riches of Italy, and all the riches of France and Germany, and of the whole world; if we could have everything by wishing for it, and had no desire ungratified, Fra Leone, my child, with all this we should not possess the perfection of happiness." And as the Saint having said these words, became once more absorbed in meditation, Fra Leone walked on before him again, thinking over the words that St. Francis had spoken. A few

minutes after he called to him again, and exclaimed with fervour, "Fra Leone, Fra Leone, if we should enjoy all the pleasures of life, and should possess all the luxuries of the world, and should be satiated with delights, believe me, Fra Leone, we should not possess the perfection of happiness." The good brother listened as before, and then walked on in silence. A third time the Saint called his friend—"Fra Leone," he said, "if we were elevated to the highest rank of human dignity; if we ruled over nations as princes and kings; if we were the masters of the world, and saw all men prostrate before us; even if God Himself should invest us with the supreme authority which He confides to the Pope, the Vicar of Christ; and we beheld the faithful come to kiss our feet and implore our benediction, even then, Fra Leone, we should not possess perfect happiness." At last, when St. Francis had called a third time to Fra Leone, and had said that happiness could not be found in the pursuit of knowledge, in the esteem of men, nor in the possession of any creature, the good brother answered, "Father, you have spoken of all those things which men chiefly desire, and have said that happiness is not to be found in them; I entreat you therefore to tell me in what true joy consists." And St. Francis answered, "Fra Leone, little sheep of God, true joy consists in seeking only God. If you always do His holy will, if you love Him with all your heart, if you apply yourself before all things to please your Saviour, and to follow Him to Calvary; if, like Him, you are meek and humble of heart, if you pardon those who offend you, if you do good to all for the love of Jesus, if you weep for your sins in perfect penitence; in a word, if your conscience is upright and pure, and if your soul is prepared by a truly holy life for the eternal happiness of heaven, Fra Leone, my child, *this* is true joy, and you shall be happy with a perfect happiness." Whilst speaking thus the face of St. Francis grew radiant, and his eyes were bathed in tears. Brother Leo listened as to a voice from heaven, and derived such profit during the whole of his life from the lesson he received that he lived full of merit, and died in the odour of sanctity.

LITTLE VIRTUES.

THAT which is little in the eyes of man is often great in the sight of God ; and the Christian faith teaches us that God loves the simple and lowly of heart. Judging only by outward appearances, we may divide all virtues into two classes, little and great. Great virtues, or at least those which men call great, are brilliant and striking qualities, such as claim universal notice and admiration, whilst those which men call little are simple, hidden virtues, concealed from the eyes of the world, and absorbed, as it were, in the sweet completeness of a good and holy life.

“Every one,” said St. Francis of Sales, in his ever-gentle gracious words, “every one desires to have brilliant virtues and to display them, fixed to the cross, so that they may be seen and admired from afar. Very few are eager to gather those which, like the thyme and violet, grow at the foot and in the shadow of that tree of life. Yet these are they which have the sweetest perfume, and have been most freely watered with the Blood of Jesus, who gave this precept to His children as their most important lesson, ‘Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart.’”

It is not every one who is called upon to exercise the great virtues of magnanimity, firmness, patience, endurance, constancy, and courage. The occasions which call them forth are very rare ; yet all desire to possess them, because they are seen and known of men, and thus even human vanity is often unconsciously soothed and gratified. As to little virtues the world esteems them not, but passes them utterly by, and the heart that desires them must needs be pure and true. Who, indeed, pays any attention to the virtue which gently yields to another’s ill temper, and patiently bears with another’s imperfections, which meekly endures a little injustice, an unreasonable prejudice, a distasteful companionship, and all the thousand little pinpricks which do so goad and irritate our faulty human nature, that we may truly call them the small miseries of life ? Who troubles to praise or to exalt the humility of those who bear a refusal with sweetness, who are grateful for a benefit, who treat their inferiors with kindness and courtesy, and are tender and pitiful to the poor ? All these we consider mere trifles ; we desire only

those virtues which St. Francis of Sales described as "*braves et bien vêtues*," viz., virtues which are dazzling and outwardly attractive; and we do not consider that life is so made up of little things and trifling actions that for extraordinary virtues there is very little room. Opportunities for making a fortune are not to be met with every day; but every day we may gain a little, and if we do but husband our small resources, we shall certainly grow rich in time. We should quickly accumulate great spiritual riches, and should lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven, if we would but employ in God's most holy service all the little occasions which we meet with every moment.

Let us therefore rejoice that we can so easily please God, and become perfect. Let us never lose one happy chance of sanctifying our life, but, lifting our hearts in prayer, let us consecrate our most trifling actions, our lightest labours, and our lightest cares, by offering them to God. Let us do all for Jesus, and we shall not lose our reward: like the ant, which during the summer accumulates little by little its provisions for the winter, we shall find, when life's labour is over, that we shall reap in a glorious and eternal harvest the reward for which we have worked so humbly here below.

MEEKNESS.

By speaking to you of meekness, and by trying to induce you to practise it, let me assure you that I am doing you a very great service. For meekness is the fountainhead from which a sweet and virtuous nature springs; and to possess a sweet and virtuous nature, is also to possess the secret of a happy life. Meekness is that Christian virtue, most rare and lovely, which enables us to yield constantly to others for the love of God, to bear everything from them, and to give them as little as possible to bear from us. Meekness is to our daily life just what oil is to the motion of a machine. The oil which is dropped into the wheelwork does not seem of such great importance. And yet if it were forgotten, what creaking, what straining, and what obstructions would be the result! And thus it is with meekness. It is the virtue of virtues, incessantly enjoined upon us by our Heavenly Father as

the balm of all our actions, the greatest preservative of society, and that most exquisite flower of Christian charity which it is necessary to practise at all times and in every place.

Humility and gentleness, such is the great lesson which our Saviour hath bequeathed to us. Jesus is called the Lamb of God in the Holy Scriptures, not only because of the sacrifice of the cross, but because of the perfect all-enduring meekness which He showed during His whole life, and especially during His Passion. Never a reproach, never one word of anger! When standing bound before Caiphas He received a blow, and was treated as a blasphemer; He answered simply to the servant who struck Him, "If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou me?" Our Blessed Lord preserved this marvellous meekness even unto death. When He was hanging on the cross in the last terrible agony, He could speak only words of sweetness to His murderers. He prayed God, His Father, to pardon them, and consoled with a Divine hope the penitent thief crucified at His side!

"Nothing gives so much edification to others as meekness," said St. Francis de Sales, who was himself a perfect model of Christian gentleness. In him this beautiful virtue was ever conspicuous. His looks, his words, his manner, all was sweetness. Saint Vincent de Paul, who had the happiness to see him, said that he had never known so meek a man, and added that he seemed to see in him a living picture of the Saviour's loving-kindness. If he refused a favour which he could not grant without wounding his conscience, he would do so with so much love and gentleness that those who had asked it would always leave him with as much content as if it had been granted. He was equally good and kind to all; to his superiors, his equals, his inferiors, in his own family, and in the midst of strangers; how great a contrast to those who, in his own words, appear to be "*des anges dans la rue, et des diables à la maison.*" He never complained of any oversight on the part of his servants, and whenever he gave them any directions, it was with the greatest kindness. Gentleness is always the best method of enforcing obedience, and the words of the Gospel are verified every day: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the

land." "I have tried to govern in many different ways," said St. Jane Frances of Chantal, "and I have never found a better way than that which is based upon gentleness and patience."

We often hear very pious people, Christian women, for instance, complain that they cannot lead their husband or their children back to God. Why do they not use the only means by which they may attain the end they so greatly desire? Are flies ever attracted by vinegar? Much more is gained by gentleness than by severity, and St. Vincent de Paul said that during his life he had given three severe reprimands, thinking that he had good reason to do so, and not one had any effect, whilst those which he had administered with gentleness had always had a good result.

St. Francis de Sales, by his sweetness, could obtain from others all that he wished, and he often succeeded in converting the most obstinate sinners who had resisted every effort until then. This was also the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul. This holy priest once confided a great sinner to the care of a missionary of his company in the hope of his conversion; but all was in vain, and the missionary entreated St. Vincent to use his own influence; and the Saint having spoken for some instants to the man, converted him without trouble. This sinner afterwards declared that it was the gentleness and charity of the Saint which so quickly touched his heart.

It is when we are moved to anger, or too harshly reproved by a superior, or insulted by another, that it is especially necessary to practise meekness. Oh, how dear to the Sacred Heart of Jesus are those meek and humble souls which, for love of Him, bear affronts with patience, pardon their enemies, and return good for evil! It is not difficult to be sweet tempered when nothing occurs to vex us; but just a little contradiction, and behold! we grow indignant, and throw out fire and flames like Mount Vesuvius. We must have a truer meekness than this, and must pass through this life as a lily amongst thorns. The true Christian ever preserves a peace in his heart which influences every action, and is visible to all, and this in adversity as in prosperity.

When we are obliged to answer some one who has insulted us, let us be careful to do so with gentleness. A

soft answer will extinguish the fire of anger. When moved it is better to be silent, and if through human weakness we are sometimes carried away by anger, let us immediately endeavour to grow calm, and seek an opportunity of speaking kindly to him who has offended us.

Let us carefully avoid giving way to ill-temper and angry feelings. Those who truly love God are never ill-tempered, because the thought of the presence of God, and of His holy will, calms the soul even in the midst of contradictions, and thus the true Christian is gentle and courteous to every one. But this gentleness cannot be obtained without a constant effort, nor without a great love of Jesus Christ, and a faithful practice of religion. Experience teaches us that we are never so charitable to others as when we are faithfully serving God. In this as in everything, religion shows herself sole mistress of the happiness of men; and if life is hard and bitter, it is because they reject and will not listen to her gentle voice.

HUMILITY.

IN one of the most Divine passages of the Divine Gospel, our Lord Jesus Christ declares that Christian perfection consists in understanding and practising two words: HUMILITY and MEEKNESS. "Come to me," He says to us, "all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is sweet and my burden light."

What, therefore, is humility, and what is meekness? Two excellent subjects for meditation.

Humility is a Christian virtue, which enables us to perceive our own misery and nothingness, and to render to God the glory and honour of all the good we do; it subdues our foolish pride, and teaches us never to exalt ourselves, or to despise others.

Humility is a *virtue*, that is to say, a victory and a strength. We are all inclined, by reason of original sin, to pride, vanity, and vainglory. In order to repress this evil tendency, we need strength, and must ever wage a constant and untiring combat. This strength is no other than the virtue of humility.

Humility is a *Christian virtue*. The strength which is bestowed on us in order to subdue our pride comes to us from Jesus Christ, the only source of every grace. By baptism Jesus our Saviour established Himself in our soul as a king in His kingdom, as a master in His house ; and He imparts to us the spirit of holiness to communicate to us all His virtues, and amongst others His most holy and most perfect humility. Jesus Christ is therefore the first principle of the humility of His disciples ; and the Holy Spirit, who unites us to our Saviour that we may be like unto Him, is the inexhaustible source of humility. By the sacrament of confirmation this Divine Spirit communicates to us all the strength of Jesus, and thus bestows on us the most powerful means of triumphing over every vice, and especially over pride. This strength is nourished and increased by the Holy Eucharist and by constant prayer, and by these means alone can we possess the secret of perseverance in Christian humility.

Humility makes known to us what we truly are, and reveals to us our utter insignificance and unworthiness. In order that we may detest pride and resist it, Jesus Christ teaches us clearly that it is only a folly and an illusion. The proud man persuades himself that he is a most blameless and indeed an almost perfect character ; he is full of self-complacence ; he desires and seeks the good opinion of men, and is irritated and surprised if they fail to regard him with the same amount of esteem and admiration that he bestows so lavishly upon himself. All these sentiments are false, contrary to the truth, and are only a lying illusion by which Satan, the father of lies, seeks to destroy our souls. By ourselves and of ourselves we are nothing, we have nothing, and we can do nothing. All the good which is in us comes from Jesus Christ and belongs to Jesus Christ, even our very existence, of which He is the Creator, and which depends wholly upon Him. The light which is shed over the whole earth comes from the sun ; and does not this light remain even here below the sun's peculiar property ? Supposing that the earth could think and speak, what would you answer if it said to you, "Look at me, and behold my splendour ; this light is mine, it is my own possession, and all the glory and honour due to it are mine" ? You would laugh in derision, and might in justice reply, "O foolish and self

deceived ! of thyself thou art nothing but a dark, dense, heavy mass ; all the splendour which transfigures thee, all the light which surrounds thee, comes from the sun and belongs to the sun, yes, even to the feeblest, faintest ray. Wait a little till the night shall come, and thou shalt be dark as any dungeon." And thus it is with Jesus Christ and every one of us. Jesus is the principle of all the good we possess, the source of all light, strength, and perfection, and we depend entirely upon Him. It is the apostle St. Paul who asks, "What hast thou that thou hast not received ? and if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it ?" Therefore of ourselves and by ourselves we are nothing, and we merit nothing, no honour, no esteem, no glory.

But we must go further, and must recognise by the light of humility that not only are we nothing of ourselves, but we are miserable sinners, worthy of punishment and all confusion. Our sins come not from God, but wholly from ourselves ; and sin being evil, despicable, and deserving of punishment, it is quite natural that in our character of sinners we should be filled with shame, and should sincerely despise ourselves, and acknowledge the perfect justice of the punishments and humiliations which God sends us from time to time. The Christian who loves his Saviour delights to render Him the honour which belongs to Him, and to annihilate himself in the Divine Presence, acknowledging simply and peacefully that he is a poor sinner, and that he confides only in the love and the mercy of God.

Humility is thus a pure act of Divine love, and it is this which constitutes excellence. Humility is the perfection of the love of God, just as meekness is the perfection of love for our neighbour, whilst both united are the perfection of a true love for ourselves. It may be easily understood how a Christian who is truly humble shrinks from seeking his own glory, and thus appropriating that which belongs to Jesus Christ. By humility we become imbued with a perfect sense of honour, as regards our relations both with God and men. And is it honourable, let me ask, to take and keep that which belongs of right to another ? All honour, praise, esteem, glory, and greatness belong to God alone, the author and principle of every good. Humility is truth and justice. It is, in the order of religion, just what justice and honesty are in our relations with society

and with our fellow-men. Humility prevents us from exalting ourselves and despising others. Do we know the secrets of God, and the measure of grace which every soul receives? I may presumptuously compare myself with my brother, and imagine that I am more devout, more charitable, more spiritual than he. I may perceive that my intellect is clearer, my memory stronger, and my judgment upon all occasions superior; but is this any reason that in reality and in the sight of God I should possess any greater merit? Not in the least; for here all things are relative, and all must render according to that which they receive. The servant who, having received only two talents, gained two talents more, was made in all things equal to him who had received five talents and gained five talents more. "And unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required." This is true of all the gifts, both natural and supernatural, which God in His infinite wisdom bestows upon each one of His creatures. Let us never compare ourselves with others, or esteem ourselves above others, because we do not possess even the fragments of the knowledge which we need to enable us to form an equitable judgment. Let us especially guard against despising any one; the Pharisee in the parable despised the poor publican whom God blessed and exalted on account of his humility. The man whom you despise, the sinner you condemn, the woman from whom you shrink, may be, each and all, converted and become great saints. Let us detest, despise, and unhesitatingly condemn the evil which is in them, even as we condemn it in ourselves; nothing is more just, more Christian, and more salutary; but let us ever distinguish between the sinner and the sin, and faithfully preserve Christian charity in deep humility.

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart, grant to us a true humility!

"BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT."

THESE words were pronounced by our blessed Lord at the very commencement of that part of His preaching which we call the Sermon on the Mount. And who are they whom He declares *blessed* and to whom He promises eternal happiness? What is signified by these words of the Gospel, *Pauperes Spiritu*? God is the Father of

light, the Creator of the human intellect, the Sovereign Lord of wisdom and of science; faith is a divine and radiant light superadded to the light of human reason; and the want of intelligence and education has ever been regarded by the Christian religion as a great misfortune and a thing most worthy of compassion; therefore the *poor in spirit* must not be sought for, as has been falsely asserted, only amongst the poor and ignorant, since the virtue so greatly commended by our Lord may be practised by the loftiest intellect as well as by the lowliest. The words of the Gospel simply mean, Blessed are they whose hearts are detached from the perishable possessions of the world. Blessed the Christian who, for the love of God, is detached from the riches, the honours, and the fleeting joys of earth. In exchange for the worthless possessions he has renounced, God shall give to him an eternal reward, and even here on earth he shall live a life of union with his Saviour and his God if he only persevere in this pure and perfect love.

Evangelical poverty of spirit is therefore simply the spirit of poverty and voluntary detachment from all that is not God; it is the spirit of humility; it is the perfection of the love of Jesus; and this is why our Lord promises the kingdom of heaven as its reward. All the Saints have been in this Divine sense *poor in spirit*.

St. Francis of Sales was perfectly poor in spirit; he desired nothing but the love of God and the accomplishment of His holy will; he never considered himself, he gave to the Church and to the poor all that he possessed, and thought so little of himself that he was contented with anything, with sickness as with health, with insult as with honour, with poverty and want as with comfort and luxury. He gave away everything, even his clothes and his furniture. He wore such shabby things that a beggar to whom some of his clothes had been given was very indignant and went to complain to St. Francis, who could not help laughing at the sight of the tattered garments.

St. Charles Borromeo, the great cardinal and archbishop of Milan, who belonged to a princely family, and had an immense revenue, gave away everything he possessed; he was only severe to himself, sleeping on a wooden board, eating nothing but bread and peas, drinking only water, and sparing himself no trouble and fatigue; and it is said

that once eight patches were counted on his scarlet robe. This great and good man was also poor in spirit.

St. Francis of Assisi, the sweetest and gentlest of the Saints, was known in his youth as the bravest cavalier and the most brilliant and accomplished young man of his country and his time. But he forcibly realised that heaven was of far higher value than earth, and that it was the truest wisdom to despise the trifling pleasures of the world and to press forward to the eternal realities that lie beyond. He renounced everything, even the rich attire which marked his family and his rank, and clothed in the coarsest habit, a cord for his girdle, barefooted, and destitute of everything but the one treasure he desired, even Jesus, his Master and Lord, he cried, his eyes bathed with tears, his heart filled with joy and inflamed with love, "Deus meus et omnia!—My God and my all!"

And thus it is with all the Saints and, to a certain extent, with all true Christians. If we would be the disciples of Jesus Christ, if we ever desire to reach heaven, we must be *poor in spirit*, that is, ready to renounce every worldly advantage for the service and love of our Divine Master. Those who have not this spirit fall far short of all the Gospel inculcates, and the kingdom of heaven is not for them. Poverty of spirit is the sublime epitome of Christian morality.

FOURTH PART.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

IN all the works of God there is nothing that is worthless or insignificant. The smallest flower, a grain of dust, the tiniest insect, each and all reveal the wisdom, the omnipotence, the infinite greatness of their Creator, as clearly as the sun itself and all the glories of the starlit heavens.

And thus it is with the Christian religion ; it has come forth, like the great world of nature, from the hands of God Himself ; or rather it is that manifestation, that revelation, which God has made of Himself to the reasonable creatures whom He has deigned to create. And therefore we may discover, even in the smallest details of the faith we hold, a depth and beauty no less wonderful than the loveliness of nature ; and in contemplating both we may truly exclaim, God alone could work such wonders ; the finger of God is there ! Let us take, for example, the sign of the Cross, that simple religious act which is so universal and so frequently practised during the course of the day. We all make this holy sign, but how many of us give any thought to the mysteries it signifies ! It is thus that the ox and the horse browse on the sweet flowers hidden in the meadow grass unconscious that they are there.

From want of reflection, we fail to attach to the sign of the Cross the importance that it merits. It was first instituted by the Apostles themselves, who, invested with the authority of Jesus Christ, taught this religious practice to the first disciples of the Gospel.

The sign of the Cross is the sign of the Christian, that is to say, it is the *outward sign* which distinguishes the Christian from other men. And why is this ?

1st. Because it recalls to him who makes it, and to those who see it made, that Jesus Christ is the God of Christians and the Lord of their whole lives. Because it reminds us that God has loved us so much as to give Himself up for our sakes to suffer on the Cross, and that we must love Him with our whole hearts. It places incessantly before our eyes Jesus Christ crucified ; and Jesus crucified is the Divine and living rule of life to each one of His disciples, and His sacred Cross their moral law. The sign of the Cross recalls to him who makes it with reverence and devotion that he is bound to imitate in his daily conduct the penance, mortification, humility, meekness, patience, detachment, chastity, and obedience of His Master, His love for His Heavenly Father and His Blessed Mother, and towards all men ; His mercy to His enemies, and His love of suffering.

2d. The sign of the Cross is distinctively the sign of the Christian, because it reminds him of the blessed eternity which awaits him. It was after His passion and death that Jesus rose again. And by His Cross He entered into glory. And so it must be with His disciples. Their glory in heaven must be the full fruition of the crucified life they have led on earth, like unto the life of their Saviour. The Gospel also declares to us that when He shall come at the last day to judge the world, the sacred sign of the Cross shall appear in the heavens to be recognised by the elect with thankfulness and love, and by the reprobate with fear and trembling ; for then shall it be the disciples of the Cross, and none but they, whom He will acknowledge for His own.

3d. It is the sign of the Christian because it brings before his mind the most important doctrines of religion. It recalls the mystery of the holy and undivided Trinity, for in making it we say, *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost* ; three persons, but one God. *In the name* ; and not, *In the names*. And also the mystery of the Incarnation, that is to say, the coming down of the Son of God from heaven to earth, to assume a body and soul like ours in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary ; for in saying, " *In the Name of the Son,*" we move the hand down from the forehead to the breast, a lively image of the annihilation of the Son of God, who reposes in the hearts of the faithful, as formerly in the chaste womb of Mary. And, again, the mystery of the Redemption, since it was upon the Cross He died to wash away our sins, to merit for us

pardon and salvation, and to open the gates of heaven which sin had closed. And the mystery of the Church of God, that great society of the disciples of Jesus Christ, that perfect union, holy, Catholic, and apostolic, of the children of the Cross ; since, being the same for all, it is necessarily the sign of their union in one body under one head : a most distinctive mark of the Catholic Church, for it recalls by its unity that the Church is one, and by its universality that the Church is Catholic.

In considering all that is symbolised by this sacred sign, we may therefore clearly understand why it is employed by the Church in the administration of all holy things, in the sacraments, in every blessing, at the beginning and end of her prayers.

Let us make it often, but especially when tempted and when troubled ; also before and after meals ; and when we make it, let us be careful to remember what it signifies, and the obligations imposed on all who bear the holy name of *Christians*.

ON REVERENCE FOR THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

Too much importance cannot be attached to the necessity of making this sacred sign with reverence and devotion. Any Catholic who with love performs this simple act of piety will soon see its excellent effects, and we propose it to all as one of the easiest and most efficacious means of sanctifying the day.

It is necessary to be very careful never to make the sign of the Cross badly, that is, to make it from habit without thinking of it, and when laughing, or to make it in haste without taking the trouble to move the right hand from the forehead to the breast, and from the left shoulder to the right. It is not necessary every time you cross yourself to say, "In the Name of the Father," &c. ; it is good and beneficial to repeat this invocation, but it is both useful and holy to cross yourself without saying anything.

Nothing is more edifying than to see a Christian make the sign of the Cross with care and reverence and in a truly Catholic spirit. The celebrated Père de Ravignan always crossed himself with scrupulous care ; any one might see that he was proud to sign himself with the

Cross of Christ. By this he preached even before preaching, and made a deep impression upon his hearers without having said a single word. A Protestant clergyman who went to hear him one day at Notre Dame said to his companion, after having seen the venerable religious sign himself with such holy and majestic gravity, "He has preached already; the sermon is finished, and we might go."

The sign of the Cross rightly made unites the soul to God, gives the spirit of recollection, drives away the devil, and powerfully dissipates temptation; it gives to the Christian the spirit of faith, and preserves him from distraction and from worldliness; but if made with *negligence*, it loses all its influence and virtue.

Parents and masters should carefully impress upon children this religious practice; and since children are like little monkeys, who imitate all they see, fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses should begin by practising what they teach, and should always both at home and at church, before and after work, before and after meals, make the sign of the Cross like true and faithful Catholics.

And now let me ask, have you felt a little conscience-smitten whilst reading this chapter? How do you make the sign of the Cross? Do you make it often during the day? Form now an earnest resolution to do all things in the spirit of faith, and never to make with indifference and distraction the sacred SIGN of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

THE PATERNOSTER.

WE read in the holy Gospel that our Lord was praying one day, and that when His prayer was ended His Apostles approached Him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." And Jesus answered them, "When you pray, say: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen." Then He added, to increase our confidence, "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and shall say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves? And

he should answer and say, "Trouble me not." . . . "Yet if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." . . . "And I say to you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." . . . "And which of you, if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone?" . . . "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him?"

We must therefore pray with great confidence in the goodness of God; and we are sure to pray as He would have us when we speak the words which He Himself has taught us. But to do this in the best way possible, we ought thoroughly to understand the whole of this beautiful prayer, since every word contains a lesson that is divine.

The "Our Father" (or the Lord's Prayer) is composed of three parts—1st. A little preface; 2d. Three petitions which relate directly to God; 3d. Four petitions which relate directly to our own needs and those of our neighbour. The preface consists of these words, "*Our Father who art in heaven.*" The three petitions which relate directly to God are these—1st. Hallowed be Thy name; 2d. Thy kingdom come; 3d. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. The four petitions which relate directly to our own needs and those of our neighbour are—1st. Give us this day our daily bread; 2d. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us; 3d. Lead us not into temptation; 4th. Deliver us from evil. *Amen* means So be it; or, May God grant me what I ask.

What could be more sweet or grand than this sacred prayer? Are not the first words sufficient to win the hearts of men?—"Pater noster—Our Father." Christians, it is a Father to whom we speak, a merciful Father who loves us, who bends down from the heights of His eternal glory to lift us by love up to Him. It is a Father, not a master, not a judge. He asks only filial confidence, goodwill, and sincere love. How sweet it is to kneel at the feet of such a God!

We do not only say, "My Father," but "Our Father," for we are all brothers, members of one family, which is the Church of Jesus Christ. The Father of the family is our Father in heaven; our Mother is the Blessed Virgin Mary, who became the spouse of the Holy Ghost by the

mystery of the Incarnation. Our brethren in heaven are the Saints who have lived before us, and are now gathered into their Father's home. And we, who are by baptism children of God, children of Mary, brethren of Jesus Christ, and brethren of the saints and martyrs, form here on earth one great family united to that family in heaven. We have a visible Father, the vicar of our invisible, omnipotent Father above—the head of the Church, whom we call, for this reason, *Our Holy Father the Pope*; our Mother is the Church, and all Christians are our brethren, and we all meet together at the sacred banquet of the Eucharist, being all fed by the same mysterious food, and thence deriving the strength we need to travel on through the journey of life until we go home to our Father in heaven.

See all that is comprehended in the first words of the Pater Noster. And where does our Father live? "*In heaven.*" Therefore our dwelling-place and our true country are not here on earth; it is not to the things of earth that we must give the heart; our dwelling-place, our hopes, our treasures must all be in heaven, in that blessed eternity which shall succeed the fleeting years of life. How powerful a motive to enable us to resist the temptations by which we are surrounded! Let us turn from that which is passing to that which shall for ever endure. Let us love our Father and think constantly of the happiness He has prepared for us above.

Does not this little *preface* contain many subjects for meditation?

In the second part of this prayer our Lord teaches to ask His Father and our Father to spread over the whole earth the glory of His name. "*Sanctificetur nomen tuum—Hallowed be Thy name.*" Yes, known, revered, loved, glorified, celebrated, praised; first, by ourselves, then by all our brethren, by the good and holy who honour it so perfectly, by sinners who blaspheme and reject and forget it. By these words we ask the propagation of the Christian faith throughout the universe, the extinction of idolatry, the conversion of heretics, infidels, and blasphemers; we ask that God will raise up holy priests and learned doctors of the faith, who will teach us by writing and preaching to know and serve our Heavenly Father better; we solemnly protest against the terrible habit of blaspheming the sacred name of God, and we all strive in

union to make compensation by our homage for the daring attacks of the impious ; and thus, as if we would deafen and silence the voice of blasphemy that it might never mount upward to His ears, we cry with one heart and with one voice, *Sanctificetur nomen tuum.* "Father, Thy name be blessed, Thy holy name be praised, adored, loved, glorified in heaven."

"*Thy kingdom come.*" This is the second petition of the Pater. And here we ask of God that the reign of His Divine grace may be established and strengthened within us ; that mortal sin may never stain our conscience ; that we may never commit a wilful venial sin ; that Jesus, the King of our souls, may govern us without any opposition, and find us wholly submissive to His sacred rule.

This petition is also a desire for the extension of the Catholic Church over the whole earth ; for the Church is the kingdom of God, and the establishment of His divine reign in the midst of His own creation.

And thus we also ask and desire the coming of our Lord, since the kingdom of God can only be completely established in this world by the second advent of our Redeemer, who upon that day will quell and annihilate for ever the rebellion of Satan and the triumphs of sin.

And, lastly, we thus renew day by day our desire of eternal happiness, and sigh for heaven, where our dear Lord has prepared for us a place, that we may reign eternally with Him.

"*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*" This is the third petition of the Pater.

There is nothing so truly good, so truly necessary, in this world as to know and accomplish the holy will of God. Outside of the Divine will all is vanity and often sin. Good does, in a manner, cease to be good when done without regard to the will of God. Take an example : A man may say, "I am a workman and the father of a family ; it is the will of God that I should labour honestly to gain a living for myself, my wife, and my children ; if, instead of working, I passed my days, like sisters of charity, in praying, in nursing the sick, &c., I should neglect my duty and should do wrong. And yet, what can be better in itself than prayer, or nursing the sick ? But for myself, under the circumstances in which Divine Providence has

placed me, such works are not for me; and though they are more perfect in themselves than manual labour, if I prayed instead of working, I should not be doing the will of God, and therefore for me that which is good would cease to be good."

The one thing necessary is to know and fulfil with love the holy will of God. In this, and for each one of us, all duty, all virtue, and all perfection consists. If each would do the will of God in that position in which His merciful Providence has placed them, peace, happiness, and order would have a universal reign. God wills only that which is good; He forbids only that which is evil. All that is good and useful to man, God wills; all that is hurtful to him, God forbids. Thus the will of God is our happiness, and happiness is the inevitable accomplishment of His will. As soon as we disregard it, misfortune comes upon us. For instance, a man who is the head of a house and the father of a family is, perhaps, an utterly miserable and disappointed man. And why is this? It is because his children despise his authority, or because his wife has forgotten her marriage vows, or because, through the dishonesty of others, he has lost his little fortune. But would not a remedy for all these evils, and for the grief which they occasion, have been found in the accomplishment of the will of God?

God willed that the children should be obedient, respectful, and attentive to the wishes of their father; God willed that the wife should be faithful, and patient, and true; God willed that the friend should be loyal and honourable, regarding the rights of others. They have not followed the will of God, and sin and sorrow are the inevitable consequences of this rebellion.

And therefore when we pray, "*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,*" it is as if we said, "O my God, I desire that I and all for whom I pray should be good and happy. I desire that all men should do good and avoid evil, that each one should perfectly fulfil his duty; first of all his duty as a Christian, and then his duty as a faithful subject, as a father, husband, son, and friend: his duty as a pure, upright, and honourable man." Could anything be better than this? It is to say in other words, "I desire that the whole earth may be the abode of peace and happiness; and that when this earthly probation is ended, I and

all for whom I pray may receive in heaven the imperishable rewards of virtue."

Only Jesus our Lord could have expressed so much in such few and simple words.

And then if you suffer, if you are poor, if you are afflicted—and truly we do not want for troubles in this land of exile!—what perfect peace this thought will give you, It is the will of God! Yes, He wills it, not to cause you suffering, He is too pitiful for that; but to prove your fidelity, to enable you to merit a greater happiness in heaven, to purify you more completely from those stains of sin which, but for this expiation, would retain you long in the terrible flames of purgatory! This is why God sends you suffering. Receive it with resignation, if not with joy; and let it always lead us to lift our hearts to our merciful Father, and pray that He will take us to heaven after a life which He has purposely embittered to us by the trials He sends us as we journey on; and in every grief let us constantly say to Him, "O my good God, my Heavenly Father, may Thy will be done in me, may I never murmur against the accomplishment of Thy holy will!" We may well treasure these words of the "Our Father." Happy he who can understand them, and still happier he who takes them as the only rule of his life and his desires!

We have now only to speak of the four last petitions, which relate to our spiritual and temporal needs.

1st. "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" Our Lord thus enjoins us to ask from God all the daily necessities of life. He desires that we should remember that God in His Divine Providence watches over us and never forgets us.

It is our *daily bread* for which He wishes us to ask, or only that which we truly require; so that we may be able to say with St. Paul, "Having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content," not desiring that which is superfluous. It is like the manna of the Hebrews in the desert. Every morning it fell in great quantities around their camps, and every one collected enough for the day; but those who took more would find it spoiled and full of worms. We should live on from day to day without undue anxiety about that future which does not belong to us. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." And every day we shall receive the grace we need to bear the cross the day shall bring, but not grace for the day that

shall follow ; then we must ask again from God. Let us therefore limit our desires to our present necessities : “ *Give us THIS DAY our daily bread.*”

2d. “ *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.*” We sin every day, and every day we must ask pardon for our sins. God is so good, and His mercy is an inexhaustible abyss ! Whatever our sins may be, however numerous, however grievous, we must never despair like Judas.

And in this petition we may see a wonderful means of reconciliation which Divine mercy presents to all without distinction ; for here the Eternal Judge, Jesus Christ Himself, declares to us that if we pardon those who have sinned against us God our Father will surely pardon us. Who, then, can despair of forgiveness ? “ Pardon me, O my God,” we may pray ; “ for I pardon all who have done me wrong. I know that Thou hast promised, and I rest upon Thine own infallible word.”

And thus, for all true Christians, evil is changed into good. If any one injures us we have only to rejoice and to say, “ I have been long burdened with sins, and trembled at the debt I knew not how to pay. Now God Himself has made my way clear. I will pardon this injury, this wrong, this outrage with my whole heart for the love of Jesus Christ, and I am assured that all my sins will be remitted by God. I pardon as a Christian should, and have nothing more to fear from my Eternal Judge.” But in order to say this we must forgive wholly and sincerely, and reject for the future any idea or voluntary thought of revenge.

3d. “ *Lead us not into temptation.*” Our life on earth is a combat ; our reward is Paradise. Our weapons are prayer, vigilance, and the sacraments ; our enemies are the devil, the world, and the flesh. We must fight with courage, and must never grow tired. Temptations meet us upon every side, and they must be treated as a besieging army trying to take a town by assault. Repulsed upon one side, it endeavours to scale the walls upon another. The besieged must be ever on their guard, and meet every attack with a constant resistance. The spiritual weapons with which we must engage in our spiritual warfare are—vigilance over ourselves, flight from occasions of sin, frequent prayer, recollection

of the presence of God, and especially confession and communion. Whoever uses these means is sure not to give way to temptation ; whoever neglects them is equally sure to succumb to it.

4th. "*Deliver us from evil.*" The greatest evil of all is sin, and eternal damnation, the punishment of sin. It is from this twofold evil that we ask deliverance every day. We may, indeed, ask to be delivered from sickness, from poverty, and from other temporal evils, but as these afflictions are often just what we need the most, because of God's special designs in sending them, we must always add to our prayer for deliverance the words that Jesus Christ taught us Himself when, in His agony in the garden, He prayed, "Yet not My will, but Thine be done." God knows what we need far better than we can know, and when He sends us troubles it is in infinite mercy and goodness. Let us therefore ask our blessed Lord to deliver us from the terrible evil of hell and its eternal flames ; from sin, from attachment to sin, and from all the vices which are its natural fruits.

The word AMEN, which is the ending of every Christian prayer, should be uttered with reverence and attention, since it expresses the ardent desire we have to be heard.

Let us, then, meditate on all these beautiful words, and strive earnestly to say the Lord's Prayer with greater recollection than hitherto. Fathers and mothers should teach their children to understand it, and impress upon their minds that it must not be said as a vain repetition and only with the lips, but that they must lift their hearts to God in faith and love if they would have Him hear and bless them when they say, "Our Father."

THE AVE MARIA.

THE Ave Maria, or Angelical Salutation, is the most beautiful and popular of all the prayers which Christians address to the Blessed Virgin Mary. There is no little child who cannot say it, and when a mother first teaches her children to pray she always adds to the "Our Father," "Hail! Mary."

The whole prayer may be described as a tribute of love. Who, therefore, has composed it? The first part was

spoken by the Archangel Gabriel, and the second part was added by the Holy Catholic Church.

Let us consider the occasion, the circumstances, and the time at which the angelical salutation was given to Christians.

Mary was at Nazareth, and was praying one day in a little grotto which formed part of the humble home of Joseph her espoused husband. It was the 25th of March. Suddenly Mary saw before her an angel surrounded with light. "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee," said this messenger from God; "blessed art thou amongst women." And as the Blessed Virgin was troubled at this salutation, and wondered what it could mean, the archangel added, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus" (that is to say, *Saviour*). "He shall be called the Son of the Most High, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." And then Mary answered the angel, "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" (The Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph had both made a vow of perpetual virginity.) But the angel said to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God, because no word shall be impossible with God." Then Mary answered, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word," and the angel disappeared. Thus the Immaculate Virgin became the Mother of God. And nine months after, on the 25th of December, in the stable at Bethlehem, she brought miraculously into the world Jesus, her Divine Son. If the first part of the Hail Mary came from heaven, so surely did the last; for it is in the name and by the power of God that the Catholic Church speaks unto men; and it was the Church, inspired by the Holy Ghost, who in the year 451 commanded that this simple and beautiful prayer should be added to the angelical salutation: "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

The circumstances which occasioned this addition to be made were these: An archbishop of Constantinople named Nestorius having dared both in preaching and in writing to attack the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin,

many of the orthodox bishops appealed to the Pope St. Celestine, and what his judgment was we may easily suppose. At first he tried with great forbearance to lead the heretic Nestorius back to the truth, by clearly demonstrating that the divine nature and the human nature being united in Jesus Christ in one only Person, who was both God and man, and thus inseparably and at the same time the Son of God and the Son of Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ must be truly and necessarily the Mother of God. Nestorius was entirely indifferent to these efforts of the Pope, and he was therefore obliged to have recourse to more rigorous measures. He condemned Nestorius as a heretic and an abettor of heresy; he excommunicated him, degraded him from his ecclesiastical dignities, and convoked a general council of bishops to judge the guilty man. This council met at Ephesus in the year 451. The solemn assemblies were held in the ancient church of St. Mary, the first it is said ever erected to the honour of the Virgin Mother. Nothing could be more solemn than the meeting at which the Fathers judged Nestorius. From the dawn of day they consulted, the doors of the church being closed. An immense crowd collected outside. The night came, and the doors were still unopened. . . . At last the meeting ended; the bishops appeared upon the steps of the portico, three Papal legates at their head. One of them, St. Cyril of Alexandria, read and proclaimed the sentence in the midst of an unbroken silence: "*Mary is truly the Mother of God. Whoever says otherwise is a heretic and excommunicated. Anathema to Nestorius!*" Exclamations of joy rose upon all sides.

The bishops were led home in triumph, incense was burned, and the whole city was brilliantly illuminated. In remembrance of this great decision the Council of Ephesus commanded that the words "Holy Mary, MOTHER OF GOD," &c., should be added to the angelical salutation.

Thus, for one blasphemy against the Blessed Virgin, innumerable praises have gone up to heaven during fourteen centuries, and God wonderfully brought good out of evil to the glory of His holy Name!

Nestorius, excommunicated and degraded like Judas from his episcopate, went into a desert to die, cursed by God and men. He died impenitent, and even whilst he

lived, upon that sacrilegious tongue which had blasphemed the Mother of God a special curse descended in a very marked and terrible way.

Such is the origin of the Ave Maria. But in order that we may be moved to love this prayer, to say it often and attentively and with an ever-increasing fervour, let us reverently consider the words.

The salutation, *Ave*, is both an exclamation of love and a mark of reverence towards the Blessed Virgin ; we should therefore say "Hail !" with love and confidence, because Mary is our good and tender Mother, the Refuge and Advocate of sinners, the Mother of mercy ; and with the deepest veneration, because she is the most holy Queen of heaven and earth, and the glorious Mother of God.

In Hebrew the name of Mary signifies *queen* ; it also signifies *sea of bitterness* and *illuminatrix*. The Blessed Virgin is indeed the queen of angels, of saints, and of men ; on Calvary she endured the most bitter sorrow ; and, lastly, she has given to the world Jesus Christ, the light of truth and holiness.

The Angel Gabriel did not pronounce the name of Mary, out of reverence for her who was to become the Mother of God. The Church has added it, first, out of love for this sweet name ; and, next, to show more clearly that the title "full of grace" could only be given to Mary. The words in the original are still more expressive than in the translation. They signify *formed in grace* ; *made*, or *innate*, with grace. Mary is perfectly and entirely in the grace of God, and without any stain of original or actual sin by the effects of which grace is destroyed. It is to this singular privilege of complete and perfect sanctity that she owes the title of *Immaculate*.

"*The Lord is with thee.*" These words are given by God as a proof of the perfect union of the Creator with His creature. God the Father is with Mary as the bridegroom with his well-beloved spouse ; God the Son is with her as a son is with his mother ; God the Holy Ghost is with her as a king in his palace, as a master in his own domains, as God in His own temple, as the soul is in the body and with the body.

"*The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women.*" These words of the archangel were also spoken to Mary by St. Elizabeth on the day of the Visitation. Mary is the

one woman above all other women, and it was she of whom God spoke to Adam and Eve when, in promising a Saviour, He said that He would make a complete separation between the devil and her. Mary is the woman, expected for four thousand years, who was predestined to the ineffable glory of giving its Divine Redeemer to the human race.

St. Elizabeth added, "*Blessed is the fruit of thy womb.*" And the Church has added here the name of JESUS, so that there should be found in this prayer the three great names, GOD, JESUS, MARY: God, the Creator and Lord of all, and our own last end; Jesus, God made man, the Saviour of the world; Mary, the bond of union between heaven and earth.

He is *blessed*, the Divine Son of Mary, for God has poured forth on Him without measure all grace and benediction; and not only is He blessed in Himself, but in Him all the nations of the earth are eternally blessed; He is for all the source of life and benediction, and there can be no blessing but through Him.

Holy Mary! *Holy*, indeed, and more than holy; for the Church bestows on her an honour far higher than that which is rendered to the Saints. She does not *adore* Mary; that would be a sacrilegious idolatry; God alone, Jesus alone, may be adored. But the Blessed Virgin merits and receives from the Church a special worship, peculiar to herself, called *hyperdulia*, which means *honour above all honour*. Above Mary there is only Jesus Christ, only God. Below her, at an immense distance, are seraphim, cherubim, archangels, angels, and all the saints.

Mother of GOD! What a title, what glory! How great the power over the Sacred Heart of Jesus which His own Mother must possess! How good it is to ask her prayers! "A single look from her," said the great St. Bernard, "disarms the wrath of Divine justice; and when she pleads in our favour the graces of the Almighty flow downwards like a mighty river." Let us therefore say with perfect confidence, "O Mother of God, and our Mother, turn thine eyes of mercy towards us. Pray for us sinners! We do not deserve to be heard by our Father who is in heaven, but thou, His holy, His well-beloved Mother, thou wilt be heard; and the title we give thee most dear to thy heart is, "*Refuge of Sinners.*"

Holy Mother, pray for us *now*, during the whole of our

life on earth ; pray for us at the moment of temptation. Obtain for us purity, humility, meekness, a lively faith, and final perseverance. Defend us from the devil, our enemy ; guard us from sin to-day, to-morrow, at every instant of our life, and especially *at the hour of our death*. *Amen*. That is the decisive moment. It is upon that last hour that our whole eternity depends ; it is then that we shall need especially the help of the Blessed Mother of God. Let us have confidence ; she will not fail us then. At that supreme moment Mary will come to us if, during life, we have been faithful in asking her help. "Behold me, my child," she will say, "I am with thee ; thou hast called me. How often hast thou said to me, *Hail ! full of grace*. And now, my child, I greet thee, full of the grace of my Divine Son, who is about to reward thee with eternal glory. Thou hast said to me, *The Lord is with thee* ; He is with thee also, O my child ! and thou shalt be with Him throughout the blissful ages of eternity. Thou hast blessed me, and hast blessed the Name of Jesus my Son ; and I have blessed thee, and have accompanied thee all through life with constant benedictions ; I have obtained for thee the grace of a happy death, and at this terrible moment I bless thee yet again. Have confidence, thy Mother is with thee ; thou hast made me thy advocate and thy refuge. Poor sinner ! thou hast done well to seek in my bosom an asylum against the justice of thy God ! He has appointed me the Mother of mercy, and I have obtained mercy for thee. Come, therefore, soul beloved of my Son, even now is that *last hour* of which thou hast spoken every time that thou hast prayed to me ; I change for thee its terrors into a calm, sweet hope. Child of Mary, child of God, enter into the joy of thy Lord !"

Such is the Ave Maria. Happy he who hallows with this sweet prayer every action of his life ! in this world he shall receive consolation, and in the next an eternal reward.

THE CREDO.

AFTER the Pater and the Ave Maria, the Credo presents itself to all the children of the Church, as a necessary part of their morning and evening prayers. Repeated with devotion, it is the best and most solemn of all the acts of

faith. The Ave Maria is the sweetest and most consoling of all the acts of hope; the Pater is the holiest and most sublime of all the acts of charity.

It is not sufficient to know these three prayers in English and to understand them perfectly, but it is also very necessary to be able to say them in Latin—the language in which the Church recites them every day throughout the whole world. In Catholic countries little children of six years old always say the Credo, as well as the Our Father, and the Hail Mary, in Latin. We can pray much better in Latin than in the vulgar tongue, since a special grace always accompanies the language of the Church. I will add that it is not difficult to learn these prayers in Latin; it can be done simply by reading them from a prayer-book for three or four weeks at your morning and evening prayers. Latin is the language of the Church, because in the time of St. Peter and the Apostles it was the language of the whole world. The Church has preserved it from the beginning out of respect for the apostolical traditions. The Creed—composed by the Apostles before their separation, about twelve years after the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord—briefly recalls the great mysteries of Christianity. And, first, it places before Christians the obligation they are under to *believe*, that is, to submit to the teaching of the Church, which is infallible, because it is the teaching of Jesus Christ Himself. To believe is to accept without doubting all that is taught by the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church. Then the Creed recalls the mystery of the existence of one only God—ineffable and supreme; a pure spirit, eternal and infinite in all perfections—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, creator of heaven and earth, the creator of all things, of the visible and invisible worlds. It briefly states the great fundamental mystery of religion, and recalls how Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God—God Himself even as the Father is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, the true Son of God, and the true Son of Mary—became incarnate by the greatest of all miracles and by the power of the Holy Ghost, and thus united the divine nature and the human nature in one indivisible Person. It recalls that the Son of God desired to suffer and die to expiate the sins of men, and to satisfy in His innocent Person the justice of His Heavenly Father; that He died to give us life; that

He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to prove His divinity ; and that He will come again at the end of the world to judge all men, the evil and the good, the living and the dead. Then the Creed goes on to teach that the Holy Ghost has been sent by Jesus Christ to His Church, and assists and directs it in all things. In the Church and through the Church the Holy Spirit unites into one family all the *Saints* of heaven, of earth, and purgatory. He fights against sin, and saves repentant sinners by means of baptism and the other sacraments ; He prepares us for the resurrection of the body, which shall take place on the day of the last judgment ; and lastly, in the Name of Jesus Christ, and through the infinite love of the Father, He plants in the souls of the faithful the germ of the *life everlasting*.

Such is the *Credo*, the apostolic summary of the Christian faith. Such is the great and holy prayer which from the time of the Apostles has re-echoed throughout the earth in one harmonious cry of salvation, adoration, faith, and love. Let this divine cry be often on our lips and in our hearts. It will strengthen the faith to which it gives so clear and unfaltering an utterance, and faith is the very foundation of the Christian life and of eternal salvation.

THE CONFITEOR.

If the Christian after his baptism became impeccable, he would only need to worship God by faith and hope and love ; but, unfortunately, in the midst of the temptations and combats of life he preserves the sad possibility of sin, and, being tempted, often falls. Therefore it is not only right but absolutely necessary that he should daily make an act of contrition, united to the acts of faith, hope, and charity ; that is to say, that he should humiliate himself for his sins, and speak sorrowful words of repentance to the God whom he has offended. And this is why we must always add the beautiful act of contrition expressed by the Confiteor to the acts of faith, hope, and love expressed in our daily prayers by the Pater, Ave, and Credo.

The Confiteor is the fourth great Catholic prayer which the Church obliges her ministers to recite every day both in the Mass and in the Divine Office, and the value of which she urges upon all her children. Nothing could be more simple, more consoling, more sublime, than this prayer

of Christian repentance. *I confess* means I acknowledge ; indeed the first condition and also the first sign of true repentance, is the sincere acknowledgment of sin committed. If there is no acknowledgment, there is no humility ; if there is no humility, there is no repentance ; if there is no repentance, there is no pardon ; and we might add, if there is no pardon, there is no salvation ; for we are all, without any exception, sinners, and the holiest Saints (the Blessed Virgin alone excepted) are only sinners pardoned and purified.

It is to *Almighty God* that we must first of all confess our misery ; for it is He whom we have offended by sin. He is God, that is, infinite goodness and infinite holiness ; He is Almighty in His goodness ; therefore if we repent with our whole hearts, we have reason to hope everything from His fatherly compassion.

We do not say, "I confess to my Saviour Jesus Christ," for a very deep and consoling reason. It is because Jesus Christ Himself, the Victim of our sins, asks forgiveness with us, for us, and in us from God *His Father* and *our Father*. Our repentance only reaches God and obtains pardon when it is united to the sorrow and the suffering of the Sacred Heart for sin. Jesus is within us, praying with us, obtaining mercy for us, and giving to our prayer and our repentance the merits of His Passion and of His own all-powerful prayers. In reciting the Confiteor, and at all times when asking God to forgive our sins, we must unite ourselves closely to our dear Lord, who, though He knew no sin, made Himself sin for us, and bore our sins in His own body upon the tree, that we all might gain access to God.

I confess . . . to Blessed Mary ever Virgin. We confess our sins to the Blessed Virgin because she is the Refuge of sinners, the Health of the weak, the Gate of heaven, the Mother of mercy, the Advocate and Help of Christians. The gentle, loving Virgin Mother pities poor sinners as a mother pities her sick child ; she prays for them, and her powerful prayer obtains for them at all times, but in our own days more especially, miraculous graces, innumerable graces of pardon and repentance.

We also ask *St. Michael the Archangel* to help us and pray for us, because he is the great conqueror of Satan and the glorious champion of the heavenly hosts. *St. Michael*

can powerfully help us to overcome the sin which is in us, since it is the work of his adversary, and if unconquered will drag us down when life is ended to the depths of hell, and there unite us for ever to the devils whose rebellion we have shared. For what is a devil but a sinner, a lost and impenitent sinner?

And next we confess our sins, our falls, our lamentable weakness to *St. John the Baptist, to the holy apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and lastly to all the Saints*, because all the Saints, and especially *St. John the Baptist and St. Peter and St. Paul*, can assist us and obtain for us the pardon we desire. *St. John the Baptist*, the precursor of Jesus Christ, will prepare in our hearts the way of the Lord. *St. Peter*, who holds the keys of the kingdom of heaven, will obtain for us the grace of being loosed from our sins. *St. Paul*, the great apostle of Jesus, will save us by his prayers, as he formerly saved the sinning Gentile nations by the zeal of his preaching and by the blood of his martyrdom.

When we confess our sins at the tribunal of penance, at the feet of the priest who is the depositary of the keys of the Church and of the Divine pardon, we add "and to you, father." The priest by pardoning our sins in the name of God restores life to our soul, and thus becomes truly our spiritual father. For what is a father but the instrument ordained by the all-powerful goodness of God to give life to a creature? The Church is our true *mother* by baptism and the other sacraments; her minister, the Catholic priest, is our true spiritual *father*, the true father of our souls. Absolution is a resurrection as real as that of Lazarus. In the Sacrament of Penance we are obliged to confess our sins in detail to the priest, because our Lord has willed it so. He only pardons us on this condition, as we fully explained when speaking of Confession.

What do we confess to God, to the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints? That we "*have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed.*" These three accusations comprehend all the sins a man can commit in this world. We add, striking the breast three times as a sign of penitence, "*through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.*" The Church thus impresses upon us that we must not seek to excuse our sins by any vain pleas, but must fully recognise them, and must humiliate ourselves willingly and

with our whole hearts. And then we ask the Blessed Virgin and the Saints (and in confession the priest) to pray to the Lord our God for us.

Pardon follows the humble confession of our sins, and the Church, who knows the loving mercy of God, teaches us to say, "May Almighty God have mercy on us, and forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life! May the almighty and merciful God grant us pardon, absolution, and remission of our sins! Amen."

Every Christian should know the Confiteor in Latin as well as in English. When he commits any sin he may recite it with much fruit, and he should never omit it from his morning and evening prayers.

THE ROSARY.

It was an ancient custom in the East to offer crowns of roses to distinguished persons, and the early Christians loved to honour in this way the images of the Blessed Virgin and the relics of the martyrs.

An illustrious bishop, St. Gregory of Naziazum, full of devotion towards the Mother of God, was inspired to substitute for the material crown of roses a spiritual crown of prayers, persuaded that it would be more acceptable to the Blessed Queen of the Church. With this idea he composed a long series or crown of prayers, which comprehended the most glorious titles, the sweetest praises, and the most excellent prerogatives of Mary. In the seventh century St. Bridget, one of the patron Saints of Ireland, brought this pious thought to a greater perfection. She made the devotion introduced by St. Gregory available to all by substituting for the beautiful prayers he had composed the most popular and still more beautiful prayers of the Creed, the Our Father, and the Hail Mary. And in order to know by some material indication how many prayers had been recited, she adopted the custom of the Anchorites of Thebaid, and threaded beads of wood or stone in the form of a crown. Rosary signifies crown of roses; and the prayers we daily recite form a wreath of spiritual roses with which in love we crown our Mother and our Queen.

The word *chaplet* means *little crown*. The Rosary of the Blessed Virgin is composed of five decades, each of which

consists of ten Hail Marys, preceded by one Our Father. St. Dominic, one of the greatest Saints of Christianity, and one of the most devoted servants of the Blessed Virgin, was specially instructed in this devotion by the Mother of God herself.

In saying the Rosary we repeat the Hail Mary more often than the Our Father, not, as has been said, because we honour the Blessed Virgin more than God, but because, being a devotion *instituted* in her honour, it is quite natural that the prayers it contains should be specially addressed to her. Everything in its time we might answer. The Rosary is not, as some unusually enlightened minds conceive, a devotion good for women. First, I do not see in what men so greatly surpass women, either as regards the intellect, or still more as regards the heart. In many cases women are superior to men. And so the saying, "Good for women!" is worth nothing. And what is there in the chaplet that is not good for every one? Is it the Our Father which is not good enough for men? Was not our Lord speaking to His own Apostles when He taught them this beautiful prayer? Or is it the Hail Mary which is beneath the mind of men? or the Creed at the beginning? or is it the sign of the Cross?

The greatest men of modern times have recited the Rosary with as much devotion as the simple women whom some, with remarkably advanced understandings, appear to disdain. St. Charles Borromeo, St. Francis Xavier, St. Vincent de Paul, Bossuet, and Fénelon are amongst the great number of those who have offered to the Blessed Virgin this daily tribute of praise. St. Francis de Sales made a vow to recite the Rosary every day. It must be a strange kind of pride which can despise a prayer so honoured by such men as these.

The principal mysteries of our redemption, fifteen in number, are celebrated in this devotion; and the right way in which to recite the Rosary is to meditate during each decade on one of the mysteries in the life of our Saviour, or His Holy Mother, and to ask God through the intercession of Mary for some virtue which we need, or which shines out more especially in the mystery we contemplate; or we may recite each decade for a special intention, to obtain some grace from God, the conversion of a friend, of a father, a mother, a child, for the cure of some disease,

the success of some undertaking, or, in case of failure, for patience and resignation.

A faithful daily recitation of the Rosary is sure to prove a great source of happiness.

A preacher of the last century was one day called in to hear the confession of a young man who had been seized by apoplexy. He found him quite unconscious, and left in order to offer up for the dying man a votive mass of the Blessed Virgin. He had scarcely ended when a servant came to tell him that his master was able to speak. What was the surprise of the priest when, on reaching his new penitent, he found him penetrated with feelings of the deepest repentance, and offering his life to God in expiation for his sins! Profiting by these happy dispositions, he received his confession and administered the last sacraments. Not knowing to what his conversion was to be attributed, he questioned him as to the cause. "Father," he answered, "I can only attribute this grace to the fervour of your prayers and to those of my dear mother. When she was dying, she called me, and, speaking to me of the dangers by which my youth would be surrounded, she said, 'My only consolation, my son, is that I leave you under the protection of the Blessed Virgin; promise me to say the Rosary every day.' I promised, and I acknowledge that for ten years this has been the only religious act which I have practised." On hearing this the confessor recognised the visible protection of the Blessed Virgin, which was clearly manifested in this most consoling deathbed, nor ceased until the sick man had breathed his last sigh.

THE MASS.

OF all the points of Christian doctrine there is perhaps not one which it is more necessary to know, yet of which many are more ignorant, than that of which we must now speak. The practice of it is so frequent, and the fruits to be drawn from it are, if rightly appreciated, so abundant, that it may be called the soul of Christianity, the centre and abridgment of the Christian faith.

I mean the MASS.

The Mass is not a prayer like other prayers. Some think that vespers or some other devotion may well fill

the place of Mass, but this is a great error ; the service of vespers forms a very excellent religious exercise, but vespers are only prayers. The Mass is indeed a prayer, but it is something higher still ; it is a *sacrifice*, and what a sacrifice ! A sacrifice in which God renders Himself present to His people ! A sacrifice in which God Himself descends upon the altar as the victim !

A sacrifice is the most holy act in the worship of the one true God ; it is an offering made to God of the life of a victim, as an acknowledgment that He is the sovereign Lord of every creature He has made. The more excellent the victim the more acceptable the sacrifice, since it draws its value from the victim which is immolated.

Let us judge from this the infinite holiness of the sacrifice of the Cross, in which Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of the living God, the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity made man, offered His own life to God His Father, to render Him a homage that is worthy of Him, that is to say, *infinite*, and to atone by an expiation equally infinite for the sins of the whole world. Can anything greater or more perfect be conceived ? And this infinite greatness, and infinite perfection, are to be found in the holy sacrifice of the Mass ; for it is the same divine sacrifice of Jesus Christ continuously offered throughout all ages.

Truly present, though invisible, in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, Jesus Christ by His Almighty power changes the bread and wine beneath the hands of His priests into His own body and blood ; and there on the altar, at the sacred moment of the consecration, He offers Himself anew as the one universal all-sufficient Victim in the presence of God His Father ; He renews the act of voluntary oblation which gave to His Passion and death upon the Cross all their infinite value ; and thus immolating Himself anew, though without the shedding of His precious blood, He renders present to all human generations the one sacrifice which saved the world.

Therefore, the sacrifice of the Cross and the sacrifice of the Mass are not *two* sacrifices, but one only sacrifice, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ Himself offered simply under two different forms. On the cross and on the altar the Victim is the same, Jesus Christ ; and this one Victim offers Himself to the same God with the same intentions. The appearance, the outward form alone, is distinct. The most

solemn moment of the Mass is, therefore, the moment of the *consecration* or *elevation*.

The bell is rung that all may be aware of the presence of our Lord. Every one must be kneeling, with bowed head, to adore in deepest reverence the majesty of Jesus Christ, and in union with Him to render all the praise, love, adoration, and thanksgiving which God expects from His creatures. We must also ask pardon for our sins, and make known our spiritual and temporal needs, uniting ourselves to this most holy Victim, for whose sake alone God deigns to hear our prayers.

It would be a great irreverence to remain seated or standing (without necessity) during the elevation; or still more to speak or laugh or look about; even the least noise must be avoided during these precious instants. Anything approaching to indifference at this solemn moment would show a sad want of religion. If we had a lively faith, we should be wholly penetrated and absorbed in the presence of the God who loves us to such a marvellous excess. All in the Mass which precedes the consecration is only the preparation for the sacred moment of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and all which follows is only the completion and the act of thanksgiving.

Nothing could be more solemn than all of these ceremonies. The greater part come down to us from the earliest ages.

In the first and second centuries, the sacred mysteries commenced, as now, by the singing of psalms and by prayers, which the priest recited aloud, and to which the faithful answered Amen. On the altar, which was usually raised above the relics of some martyr, were placed candles or lighted lamps. Incense was burned. The priest turned to the faithful then, as now, with the *Dominus vobiscum*. Then they read the letters (or epistles) of the Apostles or some passage by the Prophets of the Old Testament. Every one stood during the reading of the Gospel, which the priest or celebrant bishop explained in a homily or exhortation. After this the *Credo* was recited, and next the bread, wine, wax, and oil necessary for the sacrifice and worship were offered to the priest. Before the consecration of the Host and of the Chalice, the priest sang the prayer called the *Preface* (viz., the prayer which precedes); and a little after the consecration the *Pater*, absolutely the same as in our

own days. Before Communion the kiss of peace was given ; then followed a thanksgiving ; the priest gave the benediction with the sign of the Cross, and the communicants retired from the altar bearing in their hearts their Lord and their God. It is a great mistake to pretend that the Mass is a modern institution. It was our Lord Himself who first offered the sacrifice of the Eucharist on Holy Thursday at the Last Supper when His Passion was about to begin. And from that time apostles, bishops, and priests have said Mass everywhere and always.

Christians are obliged to hear Mass on Sundays and Feasts of obligation, and no one who is able do so on the week-days should fail to fulfil this most important duty. No other religious practice can be compared to this. How many might find time to go each morning to receive the benediction of Jesus Christ, and yet deprive themselves, from negligence, of graces which would render the day that followed holy and happy, and would sanctify their lives !

THE CEREMONIES OF THE CHURCH.

IN all times religion has made use of outward ceremonies through which to express by visible signs those sentiments of adoration, thanksgiving, and praise which spring up beneath her holy influence in the heart of man brought face to face with his Creator.

When these feelings cease to be concentrated in the depths of the heart, when they find outward utterance and become visible to the eyes of men, they are subjected to certain forms or ceremonies which constitute the public worship of the children of God.

We may say that religious ceremonials, considered in their widest sense, have not only come down to us from the time of the Apostles, but from the very cradle of the human race.

We read in the Sacred Writings that God, after creation, blessed the seventh day and sanctified it ; that is to say, that He set it exclusively apart for His own worship, teaching to Adam, our first father, who was by adoption the child of God, the manner in which this day must be employed. This primitive form of divine worship, outwardly rendered to the Lord, was gradually developed, by

the command of God Himself, into the Jewish religion ; and Moses, the great prophet of the ancient law, received upon Mount Sinai, in the midst of thunder and lightning, those ceremonial laws which he transmitted to the people of God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, having come into the world to teach men to adore God in spirit and in truth, did not for that reason suppress the outward ceremonies of the ancient law. He not only preserved many, but He also instituted new ones, and He left the Holy Spirit to His Church in order that His divine work might be preserved and developed throughout succeeding ages.

And thus from the very origin of Christianity we see the Apostles making their regulations with regard to divine worship, celebrating religious assemblies, consecrating certain edifices for Christian meetings, celebrating the sacrifice of the Mass, &c., and St. Paul reminds the faithful of Corinth that he received from Jesus Christ Himself all that he prescribes to them touching the sacrifice and the communion of the Holy Eucharist.

The Apostles, who remained together at Jerusalem for many years after the resurrection and ascension of our Lord, celebrated together the divine offices, and gave themselves "continually to prayer and the ministry of the word," as St. Luke relates in the Acts of the Apostles. After their dispersion into different parts of the world for the preaching of the Gospel, they initiated the Christian societies, which they formed in different nations, in the same true faith, the same Christian morality, and the same divine worship.

Thus, notwithstanding the difference of languages and customs, we find, throughout the whole Catholic world, that all sacred ceremonies are everywhere substantially the same. And in the Holy Sacrifice, which is the centre of Christian worship, we see all the most important parts unchanged—viz., the sign of the Cross, the recitation or singing of the Psalms, the reading of the inspired writings of the Old and New Testaments, principally from the holy Gospels ; the instruction or sermon which followed on Sundays and Feast-Days ; the offering of bread and wine, the elements of the Eucharist ; the Preface or preparation for the solemn moment of consecration ; the consecration of the Holy Eucharist, by the bishop or priest, by means of the words spoken by our Lord at the Last Supper. And,

both before and after, the prayer for the living and the dead ; the Lord's Prayer, followed by the kiss of peace ; the Communion ; the thanksgiving ; the benediction of the priest ; the use of certain vestments, and the observance of certain rites ; in one word, the foundation is everywhere the same and the differences are most trifling. The origin of these differences may be easily explained by the necessity the Apostles and their first successors found of conforming to the different habits and customs of various nationalities, and thus propagating the kingdom of Jesus Christ. And next came the modifications brought about by time, and authorised by the authority of the Pontiffs, to whom Jesus Christ, the Son of God, promised His assistance, even unto the end of the world, and whom He charged with the direction of all that relates to the preservation of the faith, the maintenance of Christian morality, and the majesty of divine worship.

The ceremonies and ancient formulas of prayers, many of which come down from apostolic times and from the first ages of the Church, are preserved in certain books, the integrity of which is guarded by the popes and bishops, and which are called the *Missal*, the *Ritual* or *Sacramentary*, the *Breviary*, and the *Ceremonial*.

In the chapters which follow we propose to explain briefly the principal religious ceremonies of the Church, and shall speak particularly of the churches, the ceremonies of the Mass, the vestments, and sacred vessels, and, lastly, of the evening services, such as Vespers, Compline, and Benediction. We shall see by this simple explanation how ill-founded are the prejudices which exist against the Catholic faith, which necessarily appears the more holy, the more perfect, and the more worthy of God and men in proportion as it becomes more clearly understood. "A little knowledge drives away religion," said the celebrated English philosopher, Lord Bacon, "and a true and profound knowledge restores faith and confirms the Christian."

THE CHURCHES.

WE have seen the importance and necessity of an outward ceremonial in divine worship. We have seen that since man is not a pure spirit, but has a body as well as a soul,

it is quite natural that religion should strive to enlist both in the service of the one true God, and by means of the senses of the body should plant within the soul the sentiments of faith, reverence, and religious adoration which strengthen and build up the Christian life and character.

Those religious sects which almost entirely reject the use of sacred ceremonies, prove by this fact alone that their religion does not come from Him who has made us what we are, and thus, under pretext of improving and *reforming* the Catholic faith, they have *deformed* everything and have ruined many souls. But in order that the true object of religious ceremonies should be fulfilled, it is necessary that they should be understood. We shall, therefore, commence by a general explanation of churches and sacred things, and shall afterwards explain more minutely the ceremonies of the Mass, of Vespers, Benediction, &c.

By the word *church* two very distinct things are understood :—1. The union of all the faithful who serve God, and form upon earth the great and holy family of our Father in heaven ; and in this sense the word means a society, and not a house of prayer. 2. We call by the name of *church* the building in which Christians gather together for the worship of God, the house in which they meet thus taking the name of those who meet there. Our churches are consecrated, blessed, and are expressly forbidden to be used for anything but divine worship. They represent in a striking manner the *living Church* of which we have spoken. The stones of which they are built signify the immense number of Christians whose perfect union forms the Catholic Church, and the pillars or columns which sustain the edifice are an image of the bishops and pastors charged to sustain and uphold the spiritual edifice of the faith. And even as the walls and columns all rest upon the pavement of the temple, upon the basis, upon the foundation, the faithful and the bishops all rest upon the Pope, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the chief and sole foundation of the holy Church of God. The basis of our churches, therefore, represents the Sovereign Pontiff upon whom everything within the Church rests : faith, doctrine, discipline, &c.

In the second place, even as the Church is composed of the Saints, who are already in heaven, of Christians still fighting upon earth. and of the holy souls who are await-

ing their deliverance in purgatory; so the material churches are composed of the *choir*, where we may see in the priests (as we shall presently explain) a figure of the Saints and Angels, of the *nave*, filled by the faithful servants and soldiers of Jesus Christ, and lastly of the churchyards, where the bodies of departed Christians repose, and which should be, in accordance with the true spirit of the liturgy, under the pavement of the temples, or at least within the shadow of their walls.

There exists one other striking resemblance between the living Church and the buildings in which we worship God. For even as in the first Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, is the centre and principle of all the glory of the Saints and Angels in heaven, of the holiness of Christians upon earth, of the hope of the souls in purgatory; so in our churches all Catholic worship and Catholic devotion centres round the Blessed Sacrament, where the same Jesus ever dwells, present in His own divine person on our altars, to be the one sacred object of our adoration and our Mediator with God.

Churches are usually surmounted by a high spire, at the summit of which shines the Cross, the holy symbol of Christianity. Sometimes we see the image of a cock, signifying the vigilance with which God should be served. In the steeple are the bells which, with their soft chimes, summon the faithful to prayer. For fourteen centuries bells have been used in the Christian Church. This custom was established by St. Paulinus, a holy bishop of Nole in Italy. Until that time Christians had been summoned to their meetings by less convenient and less efficacious means, such as trumpets, rattles, and even the human voice.

It is said that bells are *baptized*, but that means simply *blessed*, so as to set them apart for their holy use.

We might give many more interesting details with regard to the form and exterior of our churches, but we only desire to call the attention of the reader to the most essential points.

THE ALTARS AND SACRED VESSELS.

THE holiest part of the church is the altar, where the sacrifice of the Mass is celebrated. The altar is so called from the Latin word *altus*, high, because it ought to be raised by three

steps, or at least by one, above the pavement of the church. This elevation of the altars signifies the holiness of the sacrifices and prayers which, offered by the priest in the name of the people, ascend from thence to heaven. There ought always to be a crucifix and several candles upon the altar, and beneath it are the relics, placed there by the bishops when it is consecrated. It is covered with three white cloths, without which it is forbidden to celebrate the Mass.

Altars are principally intended for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, and for all that in any way relates to the Blessed Sacrament of the adorable Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

The three white cloths signify the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, at the same time inseparable and distinct. It is forbidden, because of the holiness of the altars, to place anything upon them not necessary for the celebration of the Mass.

The crucifix, always placed in the middle of the altar, and without which Mass may not be said, is intended to remind the priest and the faithful that the sacrifice of the Mass is the same as that of the Cross, in which Jesus Christ so loved the world as to give His life a redemption for many. On each side of the crucifix wax candles must be lighted, two when a priest not a bishop says Mass, but four when it is a bishop. These candles signify Jesus Christ, the true Light of the world, to which He gives both life and light by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The lamp, which burns night and day before the Blessed Sacrament, is a symbol of the same mystery. In the great churches of Rome there are seven lamps before the tabernacle instead of one, symbolising the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, of which Jesus Christ is the first principle.

In the worship of the Holy Eucharist the Church uses, principally, three different kinds of sacred vessels—the ciborium, in which the Blessed Sacrament is preserved, and which remains in the tabernacle; the chalice, which is used to celebrate the Mass; and, lastly, the monstrance, in which the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for solemn benedictions and processions.

It is needless to remark on the sanctity of these sacred vessels, especially of the chalice. In all times, even during the cruel persecutions of the earliest ages of the Church,

Christians have most religiously provided for their costliness and magnificence. They were often made of gold or massive silver, richly chased, and set with precious stones. We still try to render them as worthy as possible of that hallowed purpose for which they are intended, and the part of these vessels which touches the Blessed Sacrament must always be covered with gold. Gold, from its excellence, is the symbol of charity; and silver, from its whiteness, is the symbol of innocence and purity.

Besides the three altar cloths of which we have spoken, and which a bishop only has the right to bless, many other sacred linen cloths are used for the celebration of the Mass. The most worthy of veneration is the *corporal*, so called from the Latin *corpus*, because the Sacred Body of Jesus Christ rests immediately upon it during the Holy Sacrifice. In the tabernacle there is always a corporal under the ciborium, and also under the monstrance in Benediction. The linen cloth placed over the chalice, and intended to wipe it and to purify it, is called a *purificator*. Only ecclesiastics are permitted to touch these sacred vessels and corporals, because of the reverence which must be paid to everything connected with the *Holy Eucharist*.

EXPLANATION OF THE CEREMONIES OF THE MASS.

The Sacred Vestments.

IN the early ages of Christianity bishops and priests, when celebrating divine worship, did not wear vestments of a different shape to the dress which was commonly worn. But it is certain that even in the time of the Apostles very rich materials, often embroidered in gold and silver, were worn at the altar in order to add to the majesty of the sacred mysteries.

When the Church, after the persecutions were over, counted amongst her children the Roman emperors, and the great and noble of the earth, she surrounded the worship of God with a splendour until then unknown; and her ministers, out of reverence for the Holy Sacrifice, were vested for the altar in magnificent robes of gold, of silver,

and of silk. The shape of these antique vestments has been preserved up to the present time, with the exception of some trifling alterations. Formerly they consisted principally of a long white robe, with a *stole* or band of purple worn round the neck, and falling in front to the feet; of a large rich vestment over the white robe, called a *chasuble*; and, lastly, of a golden circlet round the head. To these vestments the Church has added, during the centuries, the girdle which draws in the folds of the white robe called an alb, and the maniple, or embroidered band, which the priest wears on the left arm during the celebration of the Mass; for bishops the golden circlet has been replaced by the *mitre*, which represents the divine royalty of Jesus Christ.

From the beginning up to the fifth or sixth century all the vestments were white. White was worn by the Roman nobility, and has always been regarded as a perfect symbol of holiness and innocence. But for the last six or seven hundred years a diversity of colours has been generally established, *white, red, green, violet, and black*, which we still see used in the liturgy. The Church desires thus to represent, as far as possible, the mysteries which she honours.

The ancient usage of *white* vestments is now reserved for the feasts of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, and of Saints not martyrs. *Red* vestments are used for the feasts of martyrs who have gained heaven by shedding their blood for Jesus Christ; they are also worn in the Masses of the Holy Ghost, because He manifested Himself on the day of Pentecost under the form of tongues of fire; and also to celebrate the memory of the Sacred Passion of our Lord and the shedding of His precious Blood. *Green*, which is little used, is the symbol of hope. Lastly, *violet* and *black*, colours of sadness and emblems of mortification, are used in all penitential seasons, principally in Advent and Lent. The vestments must be blessed by a bishop or by a priest who has been duly authorised.

The long cassock—black for priests, violet for bishops, red for cardinals, and white for the Pope—is not a sacred habit, but simply a special garment intended to distinguish ecclesiastics from other men, and to remind them constantly that their lives should be far removed from the

thoughtlessness and indifference of those who are in the world. The difference of colours marks the difference of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Over the cassock, priests, when exercising the functions of the holy ministry, wear a white garment with wide sleeves called a *surplice*. By its whiteness it signifies the sanctity of Jesus Christ, with which the priest should be clothed as with a garment; for he is the *angel* or *messenger* of the earth, sent by God to sanctify his brethren and point out to them the way to heaven.

The *rochet* is a short surplice with narrow sleeves reaching to the knees, worn only by bishops and prelates, and which may not take the place of the surplice in the administration of Sacraments and the offices of the Church.

In saying Mass a priest does not wear the surplice but the *alb* (Latin, *albus*), a long white robe which represents the white garment with which our Lord was vested by Herod. This is drawn in by a white cord, an ancient custom which signified amongst the Romans gravity and morality, purity and chastity. Upon the left arm is worn the *maniple* (Latin, *manus*), which was originally a cloth intended for wiping, if required, the hands and face; it signifies patient endurance of the ills of life.

The fourth sacerdotal vestment is the *stole* (Latin, *stola*). Placed over the shoulders of the priest, it signifies the yoke of Jesus Christ, and crossed upon his breast it reminds him that, in order to bear this divine yoke aright, he must carry his cross day by day, must renounce the evil inclinations of nature, and die to the world, to the flesh, and to sin.

The *girdle*, *maniple*, and *stole* represent the cords and bands with which our Lord was bound in the various stages of His Passion.

And, lastly, the priest is vested in the *chasuble*, which, by covering all the rest, represents the virtue of charity, and the perfection of sanctity which is required to offer worthily the Holy Sacrifice. A cross is embroidered both upon the back and in the front of the chasuble, in front to remind the priest that he must imitate Jesus Christ crucified; at the back, to recall this same obligation to the faithful who assist at the Mass; in the front, because the priest offers the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ for the remission of his own sins; at the back, because he must also pray and do

penance for the sins of his brethren. The chasuble also represents the purple garment with which our Lord was clothed as a mock king, and the cross upon it calls to mind the cross He bore upon His sacred shoulders.

The *cope* is a species of mantle used for Benediction, processions, and other solemn functions. Formally it was a *capuchin* (French, *capuce*), or large cloak with a hood, worn by ecclesiastics for religious ceremonies in the open air. It was a protection from the rain and dust. But for a long time the hood has no longer been used; it has changed its shape, and has become a simple vestment ornamented with fringe and embroidery.

Finally, the priest's *tonsure*, or crown, is to represent the crown of thorns which our Saviour wore.

CEREMONIES OF THE MASS.

From the Commencement to the Epistle.

THE Mass is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord, offered, not upon Calvary with the shedding of His precious Blood, but by the ministry of His priests, under the appearances of bread and wine.

The sacrifice of the Mass and that of the Cross are not two sacrifices, but one and the same sacrifice, of which the Victim is the same, and which the Son of God offers to His Father with the same intentions. Only the outward appearances are different, so that between the sacrifice of Calvary and that of the altar there is no *essential* difference.

The *ceremonies of the Mass* are acts of religion, and certain mysterious signs which the Church employs in the celebration of this adorable sacrifice to add to its solemnity, and to increase the fervour of the faithful.

The Mass consists of three principal parts — 1. The preparation for the sacrifice; 2. the sacrifice properly so called; 3. the Communion and acts of thanksgiving.

The *preparation* begins with the sign of the Cross, which the priest makes on himself when reaching the altar at the foot of the steps, and it lasts until the consecration.

The *sacrifice* properly so called consists in the consecration of the bread and wine into the sacred Body and most precious Blood of our Lord

The third part includes the thanksgiving and prayers after the consecration until the last Gospel.

The preparation for the sacrifice may be again divided into four distinct parts—1. The prayers which the priest and the acolyte (who answers in the name of the congregation) recite at the foot of the altar, and at the altar itself until the Epistle ; 2. the instructions and profession of faith contained in the Epistle, the Gospel, and the Creed ; 3. the oblation and sanctification of the bread and wine intended to be consecrated ; 4. lastly, the solemn invocation and the secret prayers of the Canon, which immediately precede the consecration of the Holy Eucharist.

The priest and the acolyte commence by making the sign of the Cross, thus showing that the action which they are about to perform is no other than the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Both kneeling or bowing down, represent by this attitude of humility the reverence due to the Majesty of God, and the humiliations of Jesus in the sacred mysteries of the Incarnation, the Redemption, and the Holy Eucharist. During these prayers, and especially during the *Confiteor*, both the priest and the faithful should excite in themselves a deep contrition for their sins, which have been the true cause of the sufferings and passion of their Saviour. They should recall His sorrowful prayer in the garden of Olives, when, prostrate on the ground, He asked pardon for sinners, and offered Himself to His Father as the universal Victim of expiation. It is with such memories as these, and in union with Jesus, suffering and dying, that we should humiliate ourselves at the beginning of the Mass.

The priest goes up the steps to the altar as Jesus Christ, whom he represents, the Mediator between God and man ; he commences by kissing the altar, asking God, through the merits of the Saints whose relics rest beneath it, to grant to all the pardon of their sins. The priest kisses the altar *seven times* during the Mass, and turns to the faithful *seven times* with the holy greeting, *Dominus Vobiscum !* ("The Lord be with you.") This mysterious number expresses the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, of which Jesus Christ is the only source, and which He communicates to the world by the merits of His sacrifice, and applies by the ministry of His priests.

Having gone up to the altar, the priest now goes to the left side (to the right of the spectator it is true, but to the

left of the crucifix and tabernacle, the principal objects in the Church). A deep meaning is hidden beneath these different stations of the priest, whether in the middle of the altar, at the left, or at the right side. The left side represents the ancient alliance of the patriarchs, the prophets, and the law of Moses, from the creation of the world to the coming of the Saviour. The right side, the most worthy and the most noble, represents the law of grace and the new dispensation, from the coming of Jesus Christ to the conversion of the Jews, which shall take place in the last ages of the world.

During the greater part of the Mass, the priest, the living symbol of Jesus Christ, stands in the middle of the altar, and thus expresses that the Son of God made Man is the centre at which the old and the new dispensations unite.

The first prayer which he recites is called the Introit, viz., commencement. In this the Church expresses in a general way the object of the feasts which are celebrated during the course of the year. Then he returns to the middle of the altar and recites the *Kyrie Eleison*, which is composed of three invocations to each of the Adorable Persons of the Blessed Trinity. *Eleison* is a Greek word signifying *have mercy*.

Then comes the *gloria in excelsis*, a hymn of joy and triumph, which is only recited on feast days and times of rejoicing. The first words of this magnificent hymn were spoken by the angels of heaven on the birth of the Saviour. The rest, composed fifteen hundred years ago by the great French Bishop, St. Hilary of Poitiers, is the development of the glorious exordium. In reciting it we should unite ourselves both to the celebrant and to the angels who assist invisibly at the altar, and thus render to God the glory which is due to Him.

The priest then turns to the people with the *Dominus Vobiscum*, having first kissed the altar in order to express that he is about to draw from the very bosom of God the benedictions which it is his mission to shed over the earth. He next recites the prayer called the *Collect*, viz., *union*, because it is made in the name of all the faithful, and contains the substance of all petitions. The Church always concludes it by the invocation of the name of Jesus Christ, to make us feel that we have access to God only through Him who reconciled the world. At the beginning of these public

prayers the priest says aloud *Oremus* (Let us pray), so as to excite the faithful to greater fervour. During this time he keeps his hands extended, according to an ancient custom in the primitive Church instituted by the Apostles, to recall, without doubt, Jesus Christ crucified.

Here terminate those prayers in the preparation which are the most distant from the sacrifice of the Mass. They are followed by the reading of the Epistle and Gospel, and by the recitation of the Creed, of which we shall speak in the next chapter.

From the Epistle to the Canon.

Epistle means *letter*, and the first portion of the sacred Scriptures read in the Mass is so called because it is usually taken from the inspired letters of the Apostles. Sometimes it is taken from the books of the prophets of the Old Testament.

When it is ended the priest moves to the right side of the altar, expressing by this that the blessing of God has been withdrawn from the Jewish people, because they have lost the faith by rejecting Jesus Christ, and has been transferred to the Christian nations who have believed in this Divine Saviour.

All rise when the priest begins to read the Gospel and make the sign of the Cross upon the forehead, the lips, and the heart. The Gospel is the abridged history of the principal actions, and most important teaching of our Lord.

We must listen to the divine words standing, to express that we are ready to follow our adorable Master, to serve Him, and to fight for Him. We sign our foreheads as a witness that we are never ashamed of the holy Name we bear; our lips, because they must be holy to pronounce the words of the Gospel; our hearts, to drive away the devil, and to prepare them to receive the Word of life, and bring forth abundant fruit.

The Gospel being ended, the priest kisses the book as a mark of reverence, and returns to the middle of the altar. There he recites aloud the Credo, or abridged formula of the Christian faith, composed by the Apostles, and developed by the bishops at the first General Council, held at Nice, fifteen hundred years ago. We stand also during the Creed, to manifest clearly our undoubting faith, and

our firm resolve that our daily lives shall wholly accord with this our outward and solemn profession. Nevertheless, from a feeling which may be easily understood, both the priest and the faithful kneel humbly and reverently down when saying that the Eternal Son of God "*was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, AND WAS MADE MAN,*" for our salvation. At the end of the Creed all make the sign of the Cross, because it is the visible sign of the faith we have just outwardly professed.

Thus end the two first parts of the preparation for the Mass, which may be called the supplications and instructions.

Then follows the *Oblation*, or offering of the bread and wine, which shall be changed by consecration into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Our Lord Himself, when instituting the Holy Eucharist, showed His Apostles the manner in which they were to offer the Divine Sacrifice, and the Church has never departed from this sacred rule.

The priest therefore takes the bread, or Host, upon the paten, a kind of little gilt plate, which always accompanies the chalice, and having lifted his eyes to heaven to call down a benediction, he elevates the Host, and presents it to the Blessed Trinity, then places it on the corporal, making with the paten the sign of the Cross.

He next goes to the epistle side of the altar, where the server presents to him successively the cruet of wine and that of water, having first kissed them reverently on account of the consecration which is to follow. The priest, having blessed the water, mingles one or two drops with the wine of the chalice; the wine by its strength represents the Divinity of our Saviour, and the drop of water represents His Humanity and ours, sanctified by union with the Divinity. Returning to the middle of the altar, the priest elevates and offers the chalice, just as he elevated and offered the Host. Then lifting his eyes and hands to heaven, he invokes the Holy Spirit that, by His Divine fire, the sacrifice and adorable mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption may now be accomplished on the altar. The washing of hands, which follows these beautiful ceremonies, is a symbol of the perfect purity of heart with which the priest must approach the mysteries of the Body and Blood of our Lord. Turning to the congregation for the last time, he invites them, with the *Orate Fratres*, to join their prayers to his, and after some secret prayers commences the magnificent

invocation used from the earliest ages of Christianity, and called the *Preface* (from a Latin word *præfaci*, which means *prayers recited* before the consecration). The Preface being completed by the triple invocation, *Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth* (viz., "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth"), the acolyte rings the bell to warn the congregation to kneel down, if not already doing so, and to recollect themselves more profoundly now that the moment of the consecration is drawing near.

The sublime prayers which the priest recites in secret before and after the consecration are called the *Canon* of the Mass; the word *canon* is derived from the Greek and signifies *rule*. These prayers are so called because they are invariably the same throughout the Latin Church, whilst some modifications have been introduced into the less solemn prayers of the Sacrifice. One part of the Canon of the Mass was prescribed by the Apostle St. Peter himself, and when the Sovereign Pontiffs, his successors, judged it right to add some words, these additions were regarded as such an important fact that it was noted in the history of the Church, so great was the veneration for the ancient formulas.

Since the sixth century not one word has been altered in the Canon of the Mass, just as it is said to-day. It is from a feeling of reverence that it is secretly recited. For many centuries the exact words were known only to the ministers of the sanctuary, and the faithful did but join their intention to these prayers. The translation into the vulgar tongue has been many times forbidden. Recollection of mind and heart is preferable at such a moment to all the prayers which can be read or recited.

From the Canon to the End.

The *Consecration* alone is, properly speaking, the sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist. When the priest, prepared and sanctified by the rites we have now explained, reaches the solemn moment, he takes the Host into his consecrated hands, and identifying himself most completely with Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Priest and Sovereign Victim of the Sacrifice, he accomplishes the actions and pronounces the words which the Son of God was the first to accomplish and pronounce at the Last Supper, when He instituted the Holy Eucharist. Thus it is no longer the man who speaks,

but Jesus Himself by the lips of His priest. At His divine word, who called forth all creation out of nothing, the bread is changed into His Adorable Body, and the wine into His Precious Blood. And on the altar there remains only the *appearance* (or *species*) of bread and wine, veiling from our sight Jesus Christ Himself living and truly present with His Sacred Divinity and His Holy Humanity in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar!

Standing now before his God, whom he holds within his hands, the priest kneels down and adores, then elevates the Sacred Host for the adoration of the faithful.

The bell is rung three times at the elevation of the Host, and again three times at the elevation of the chalice. Jesus Christ remains thus upon the altar until the Communion. We must therefore kneel down with deep devotion in the presence of our God during this time at least, and, penetrated with His infinite mercy, worship Him with heartfelt acts of faith, adoration, contrition, and love; and, thanking Him for His inestimable benefits, we should profit by these precious moments to ask our Blessed Saviour for everything we need, both for soul and body, for time and for eternity.

If some hear Mass with coldness and indifference, it is because they are wanting both in faith and love.

The solemn silence which envelops the consecration from the Sanctus to the Pater, is only interrupted by the touching words of humility which the priest pronounces half aloud, striking his breast, *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*—"To us sinners," &c., and the secret prayer of the Canon terminates soon after with the great remembrance of eternity, *Per omnia sæcula sæculorum*—"For ever and ever. Amen."

During the Canon of the Mass the priest makes the sign of the Cross many times over the Host and chalice. And the deep meaning thus expressed recalls the whole economy of God's dealings with the human race. When he makes the sign of the Cross *three* times in succession over the Holy Eucharist, he represents the *three* phases of the great victory of Christ over Satan, the usurper of His empire, and the prince of evil. The first, which ended with the deluge; the second, which ended with the shedding of the Precious Blood on Calvary; the third, which shall end by fire at the defeat of Antichrist, when fallen humanity, for ever purified by the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier, shall attain its final beatitude. When the priest makes two signs of

the Cross in succession over the Host and over the chalice, he recalls the two comings of our Lord Jesus Christ ; the first represented by the Sacred Host, the second by the holy chalice. And even as the two consecrated species are only one and the same Eucharist, one and the same Jesus, one and the same mystery, so also the two comings of the Son of God, though separate and distinct from each other, are only one and the same mystery, the mystery of Jesus Christ, and of His divine grace, and of the Holy Church of God.

After the secret prayers of the Canon, the priest recites aloud the *Pater Noster*, that sublime prayer which was bequeathed to His own Church by her Divine Lord now present on the altar. The priest then breaks the consecrated Host into two particles, thus imitating Jesus Christ, who broke the Sacred Bread before He distributed it to His disciples at the Last Supper. This ceremony also recalls, in a mystical way, the separation of the Soul and Body of the Saviour in the sacrifice of Calvary. Then he invokes three times, under the touching title of *Lamb of God*, the Divine Eternal Victim of the sins of the whole world, He who, though reigning for ever omnipotent in the highest heaven, still annihilates Himself for us day after day in the sacred mystery of the Holy Eucharist.

The time of the priest's communion now draws near, and he is about to receive within his heart, and to unite his whole being to his Creator and his Saviour Jesus Christ ; and taking in one hand the Living Bread come down from heaven, he strikes his breast three times, acknowledges his deep unworthiness, and says, " Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof ; say but the word, and my soul shall be healed."

Then he communicates, and remaining for an instant wholly penetrated by the sacred presence of the God of love, whose living tabernacle he has now become, he takes the chalice, makes upon himself the sign of the Cross, and communicates under the second species.

If any of the faithful present themselves at the altar, the servers repeat the Confiteor aloud, during which each one should excite himself to repentance. The communicants, then kneeling reverently at the altar rail, hold the cloth upon their extended hands to receive the Sacred Host, if by any misfortune it should fall. The priest, whilst placing

the Blessed Sacrament upon the tongue, says, "May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul to life everlasting. Amen."

After having communicated, the priest receives the ablutions, and the server pours wine and water over his fingers which have touched the Blessed Sacrament; then he wipes the chalice and covers it over, folds the corporal, and puts everything in its place.

During this the server removes the Missal from the right side to the left, a symbol of the future conversion of the Jews, God's ancient people, who are also destined, before the end of the world, to participate in the light of the Gospel. And just as the return of the Jews will take place, according to the ancient prophecies, a little time before the end of the world, so this simple ceremony, by which it is prefigured, takes place a little before the end of the Mass.

The priest then turns to the congregation for the last time, dismisses them, and blesses them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by making over them the sign of eternal salvation; and at this moment he is truly a striking image of Jesus Christ at His last coming, when He shall complete the work of His Church by His supreme benediction: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess ye the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Formerly the Mass ended with this benediction, after which the priest left the altar, reciting the first verses of the Gospel according to St. John; but the custom has now prevailed of reading this Gospel at the altar itself.

We trust that the little that has been said may increase your reverence for divine things and help you to assist with more devotion at the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass.

THE CEREMONIES OF HIGH MASS.

THE two different methods of celebrating Mass are distinguished by the terms Low Mass and High Mass or the Mass which is sung.

As regards the respective excellence of the two, no difference exists, and the only distinction arises from the outward solemnity of the ceremonies. The principal diffe-

rence is expressed by the name. Low Mass is said, and High Mass is sung. Christian services were not always accompanied with singing, and it appears that during the first three centuries of the Church the sacred prayers were simply recited. But when the fury of the persecutions had ceased, and the conversion of the Roman Empire permitted the Christians to celebrate the sacred mysteries without fear, they became eager to add to their solemnity, not only by the magnificence of the churches, the vestments, and the sacred vessels, but also by music and singing.

One of the holiest popes who has ever governed the Church, St. Gregory the Great, did not consider it beneath his supreme dignity to make regulations with regard to the ecclesiastical or plain chant, which is called for this reason the *Gregorian Chant*. St. Gregory collected and revised the sacred chants already in use, and added to them a great number which he had composed himself. During the course of centuries, great saints, popes, bishops, monks, emperors, and kings, and sometimes even pious queens, have enriched with their own compositions this venerable collection, known at the present time under the name of the Roman Chant. Formerly the praises of God were sung only by ecclesiastics consecrated entirely to the service of the altar. But now that the number of the ministers of the sanctuary has so greatly diminished, the choir is usually composed of members of the laity, who fulfil this holy duty either for a salary or from a spirit of religion.

At the High Mass and other services they wear a cassock and surplice, according to the ancient custom. Certain parts of the High Mass should be sung by all the faithful, the choir leading and sustaining the chant. These are the Kyrie Eleison, the Gloria, the Credo, the Sanctus, and the Agnus Dei, and also the short responses, Et cum Spiritu tuo, Deo Gratias, Amen, &c. ; and we must insist upon one thing: the public services are intended to be *sung*, and those who find them long and wearisome do so because they fail to join in them with fervour and devotion.

We have explained the ceremonies of Low Mass, and will therefore only add a few words concerning the rites peculiar to the solemn High Mass.

The first of these ceremonies is the *Asperges*, or sprinkling with holy water, which has just been sanctified by the priest with special benedictions; and this is intended to remind

the Christian people how holy their lives should be, and with what purity of heart they should assist at the sacred mysteries. It is for the same reason that there is always holy water at the door of the church, with which all should bless themselves on entering.

After the Asperges, and before the Mass, comes the Procession, a grand and beautiful ceremony, common in the Church from the first centuries, and full of deep significance; for Processions are typical of the onward march of the Church throughout succeeding ages. For even as it comes forth from the sacristy, to which it shall finally return, preceded by the cross and terminated by the priest, who is the living symbol of Jesus Christ, thus the Church, coming forth from God her Creator, to return to Him at the end of time, has for her Divine Head Jesus Christ the Son of God, the principle and the end of all things, who alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It is only by marching under His divine standard and uniting ourselves to Him that we can hope to reach our heavenly home at last. And it is most foolish and ill-judged to criticise the devotion of the faithful who delight to join in Processions. At High Mass the priest is assisted by two ecclesiastics called the deacon and sub-deacon. The sub-deacon represents the patriarchs, prophets, and saints of the Old Testament, and the people of God, who were specially chosen and called to give to the world the Sacred Humanity of the promised Messiah; the office of the sub-deacon at the altar is to prepare the bread and wine destined to become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and also to sing the prophecies and the Epistles. And just as the ancient dispensation, after having prepared and produced the holy humanity of Jesus Christ, refused to acknowledge Him as the world's Redeemer, and did not profit by His sacrifice, so the sub-deacon, after having presented to the deacon the elements of the sacrifice, descends to the foot of the altar, being in a manner excluded from the mysteries about to be celebrated, and remains enveloped in a long veil from the offertory to the Pater, holding the paten before his eyes to signify the blindness of the Jewish people. But since this blindness will cease before the end of the world, and the ancient people of God will become His chosen people once again, and participate in the merits of the Saviour, so the sub-deacon,

after the Pater Noster, goes up again to the altar and stands by the side of the celebrant once more. As the representative of the new dispensation, the *deacon* alone is charged to sing the Gospel and assist the priest during the whole of the Mass. The singing of the Gospel forms one of the most solemn rites. After having placed the holy book upon the altar, in the same place where the sacred Body of the Lord will presently repose, the deacon, bowing down, asks God to cleanse his heart and lips that he may worthily announce the divine words. He then takes the book, and, holding it on his breast, receives the benediction of the priest, and carries it to the place appointed for the singing of the Gospel, preceded by the cross, and by acolytes carrying lighted candles and incense. The cross signifies that the Gospel contains the law of a crucified God, and the candles that the word of Jesus Christ is the light of the world; the incense is the homage rendered to the divinity of our Lord.

When the holy reading is ended, the open book is reverently carried to the priest, who kisses it, saying, "May our sins be blotted out by the words of the Gospel."

After the Gospel the sermon is preached, and is usually an explanation of the Gospel which has just been read. One other ceremony which distinguishes High Mass from Low Mass is the use of *incense*, symbolical of the prayers of the faithful.

THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS.

THESE are the first words of one of the most beautiful prayers of the Catholic Church, taken from the canticle of the angels who, during the night of Christmas, hailed the birth of Christ, the Eternal King, the Adorable Creator, the Almighty Lord, and the most gentle, and loving, and merciful Saviour.

After having implored the pardon of our sins by the *Kyrie Eleison*, the priest of God, lifting his hands and eyes to heaven, intones or recites aloud the angelical hymn :

Gloria in Excelsis Deo !

"Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we

adore Thee, we glorify Thee, we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Thou who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayers. Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For Thou only art holy : Thou only art the Lord ; Thou only, O Jesus Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen."

The first words of this magnificent hymn are taken literally from the Gospel. The holy angels who were sent by God to announce to the shepherds of Bethlehem the coming of Jesus Christ, were the first to sing, "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will." And thus the priest, sent by God to men, addresses to them the same words at the commencement of the Mass, to tell them to prepare themselves to receive worthily the same Jesus, who is so soon to descend upon the altar, humble, hidden, small, and helpless, as in the crib of Bethlehem, and veiling His Divine Majesty beneath the appearance of the Sacred Host in the mystery of the Blessed Sacrament.

The shepherds of Bethlehem, men righteous and devout, faithfully responded to this heavenly invitation ; they believed, adored, blessed, and praised with their whole hearts the God of heaven, as a little weak and helpless child ; and though hidden in His deep humility beneath the form of His own creatures, beneath the form of flesh and blood, they recognised by faith the Infinite, Eternal Son of God whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the angels of heaven continually adore. And this is what we too must do, His Christian children, at the invitation of our priests ; from the very depths of our hearts we must say to our dear Lord, so soon to descend for us upon the altar : "We bless Thee, we adore Thee, we give Thee thanks, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, have mercy on us ; for Thou only, O Jesus Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father."

The words of the Gloria, which follow the Canticle of the Angels, belong to the first ages of the Church. Many

learned writers attribute them to St. Telesphorus, one of the popes, martyred in the second century ; many others to the great St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, who lived in the fourth century. But it is certain that this beautiful prayer clearly embodies the Catholic doctrine with regard to the mystery of the Incarnation, attacked in the time of Hilary by the heresy of the Arians, and energetically defended by that great bishop. The Arians pretended that the Son of God was not equal in all things to the Father and the Holy Ghost, and that thus Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God made man, was inferior to His Father. The Gloria gives a triumphant contradiction to this error by putting into our lips these words to say to Jesus our Divine Lord, who is perfect God and perfect man : " We adore Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son : O Lord God, Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us, receive our prayers. Have mercy on us, Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father (that is to say, who art His equal and shares His almighty power) ; For Thou only art holy ; Thou only art the Lord ; Thou only, O Jesus Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father." We must therefore always sing the Gloria with lively sentiments of faith and love for Jesus Christ, and thus unite ourselves to the faith and love of the angels, who invisibly assist the priest at the altar whilst he celebrates the most holy sacrifice of the Mass.

VESPERS AND BENEDICTIONS.

THE evening service usually consists of *Vespers, Complin, and Benediction*. The word *Vespers* signifies evening prayers. No one is positively obliged to be present at these offices, but good Catholics consider it a duty. Formerly it was an obligation to assist at *Vespers* as well as at Mass.

Vespers are usually composed of five psalms, a hymn, the Magnificat, and a prayer. After having recited the Pater Noster and Ave Maria in secret, the celebrant, standing, and turned to the altar, makes the sign of the cross, to show that our prayers have access to God only through the merits of Jesus Christ crucified, and sings at the same time these words, with which the divine office always com-

mences : “ *Deus, in adiutorium meum intende—O God, come to my assistance.*” It was Pope Gregory the Great, who, twelve hundred years ago, directed that this versicle, taken from the sixty-ninth Psalm, should be recited before each of the hours. It is followed by the Gloria Patri, or Invocation to the Blessed Trinity, in whose honour the faithful assemble for prayer. Alleluia is a Hebrew word which signifies Glory to God.

As we do not wish to speak here of the psalms in detail, we shall only say that it is impossible to judge of the beauty of these holy canticles from the ordinary translations in our prayer-books. It is said that by being translated from the original Hebrew into the Latin tongue, much of their beauty has been lost, and a second translation deteriorates from them still more. Inspired by the Holy Ghost, and expressing the interior sentiments of Jesus Christ, of the Church, and of all faithful souls, the Psalms, to the number of a hundred and fifty, form one of the most precious books of the Holy Scripture.

Almost all were composed by the prophet-king, David, about a thousand years before the coming of the Saviour. They are filled with sublime prophecies relating to the Son of God, who declared with His own divine lips that it was of Him that David wrote in the Psalms.

Vespers almost always commence with the psalm *Dixit Dominus*. This psalm, which Jesus Christ applied to Himself in the hearing of the Pharisees, who desired to tempt Him, foreshadows, in a few verses, the divinity, the incarnation, the priesthood, the almighty power, the reign, and the sufferings of the Saviour.

Many of the tunes to which the psalms are sung have been borrowed from the Greek Chant, and are of the greatest antiquity ; and this beautiful and religious harmony is truly calculated to produce an impression truly worthy of the holiness of Christianity. And here we must repeat what we said of the High Mass : Psalms are not only prayers, they are prayers in song. They must be sung, and not simply recited. It is a deplorable custom to have Vespers and Benediction without music, and one which robs these choral offices both of their interest and solemnity.

All the psalms end with the Doxology, which the ecclesiastics recite with uncovered head, and during which all should bend. This is a very ancient custom in the Chris-

tian Church. It is attributed to the Pope St. Damasus, who lived in the fourth century ; but it is greatly anterior to his pontificate. The Antiphon consists of a few words, intended to recall to the faithful the spirit of the mysteries celebrated in the Liturgy. They are sung differently to the psalms to avoid monotony. Before the Magnificat comes a hymn, which is also intended to celebrate the feast of the day. In the Roman Liturgy the greater part of these hymns are sacred memorials of Christian antiquity, the poetic and religious inspiration of the Popes, St. Gelasius, St. Damasus, St. Gregory the Great, of St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, and many other Pontiffs and Doctors of all centuries.

Vespers end with the solemn chant of the *Magnificat*. This divine canticle, taken entirely from the Gospel, was recited for the first time by the Blessed Virgin herself on the day of her visitation to her cousin, St. Elisabeth. St. Bernard calls it "the canticle of humility." For the Blessed Virgin, in answer to the praises addressed to her as the Mother of God, only spoke of her own lowliness, and of the mercy of God who had so magnified her. During the Magnificat every one stands, out of reverence for the words of the Gospel. The same rule is observed at Complin for the canticle *Nunc dimittis*, also taken from the Gospel of St. Luke.

After the first verses of the Magnificat the altar is incensed, and also the priest, the ecclesiastics, and the faithful. Incense, which ever mounts in clouds of perfume up to heaven, is symbolical of prayer: "Let my prayer, O Lord, be directed as incense in Thy sight." The fire, without which incense cannot be used, is the symbol of the Holy Ghost, of Jesus Christ, without whom we cannot pray or gain access to God. The altar is incensed because it represents the divinity of Jesus Christ ; and the priest, the ecclesiastics, and the congregation are incensed to honour Jesus Christ, who dwells within the members of His Church in order to render them participants in His eternal life ; and the priests are incensed a second time to honour also the Divine Priesthood of our Lord, in which they share by their sacred character. During this time all should recollect themselves, and renew their resolutions to be ever worthy of their holy vocation.

Complin (Latin, *con. pleo*, signifying completion of the

prayers of the office) is composed, like Vespers, of some psalms, a hymn, and a canticle, and was instituted by St. Benedict, in the fifth century, to prepare his religious for the night's repose. The Roman Church considered this such a beautiful idea that she adopted it, and made it a general rule. Complin terminates by an invocation to the Blessed Virgin, which varies according to the different religious epochs of the year. The principal, the *Salve Regina*, is a memorial of the Crusades, and was composed in the year 1096 by a celebrated French warrior, named Adhémar de Monteil, who, being consecrated to the service of God, and having become Bishop of Puy, took part, as Papal legate, in the first Crusade.

The evening office usually ends with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, a devotion chiefly extended during the sixteenth century in order to make reparation to our Blessed Lord for all the blasphemy and sacrilegious outrages of those unhappy times against the Holy Sacrament. Benediction consists of some prayers sung, such as the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and other prayers special to the feast that is celebrated; after which the Tabernacle is opened, and the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the midst of a certain number of lighted candles. Benediction may be given by simply exposing the holy Ciborium in which Jesus Christ reposes; but in solemn Benediction the *Monstrance* is used, a sacred vessel in the form of a star, the centre of which, being made of crystal, allows the Blessed Sacrament to be seen. Each one prostrates himself in the sacred presence of God. The priest incenses three times, to honour the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, and then intones the *Tantum Ergo Sacramentum*, composed by St. Thomas Aquinas in honour of the most Holy Sacrament; it is sung by the choir, and followed by a prayer; after which the priest, being enveloped in a long white veil, symbolising the perfect holiness of Jesus Christ, with which His ministers should be clothed in order to approach Him worthily, goes up to the altar, prostrates himself, takes the monstrance, and turns to the people; the ringing of the bell warns the congregation of the solemn moment; and our Blessed Lord, present in the Sacrament of His love, blesses His children Himself. It is for this reason that the Benediction is given in silence.

In concluding this chapter, I would recommend my

readers, not only to be present at the holy services of the Church, but to join in them with reverence and devotion. May a constant remembrance of the Presence of our dear Lord in the Tabernacle keep them ever serious and recollected. May they carefully abstain from talking, yawning, making a noise, or looking about, and apply themselves with all their hearts to prayer. May they join their voices when they can in the music of the Church, and thus give to all the good example of sanctifying those times and seasons which are consecrated to God.

THE PSALMS.

WE have already spoken of the Psalms, but it is so important and so practical a subject that we must return to it once more.

The Psalms are prophetic hymns and divinely inspired prayers, and were almost all composed by the prophet-kings David and Solomon. They form one of the most beautiful books of the Holy Scriptures, and it is of faith that all the hundred and fifty are inspired.

The Psalms are all prophecies, in the sense that they all express more or less clearly the adorable mysteries of our redemption. There is a great number of which we are bound to believe this; the *Dixit Dominus*, for instance, which our Lord Jesus Christ interprets by applying to Himself in the twenty-second chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew. The Fathers of the Church have all interpreted the Psalms by applying them directly to our Lord, and to all the mysteries of His divine kingdom from the beginning to the end of time. These holy canticles relate equally to the second coming of Jesus Christ and His final triumph both on earth and in heaven, and to His first coming, followed by the terrible struggles of His militant Church. In almost all the Psalms there is what may be called an outward and historical meaning, which is only of passing interest, whilst their real value consists in all that relates to the personages or events figurative of the Messiah. David himself, like so many in the Old Testament, was indeed a prophetic figure of the Christ-King who was to come hereafter; and the accounts of the greater part of the events of his reign, and of the reign of Solomon, which

gave occasion for the composition of the Psalms, were only prophecies, only symbols of great and divine mysteries, which Jesus Christ Himself was one day to accomplish, as King of the true Israel, King of the Holy Church, first militant, and then triumphant. The combats of David and the glories of Solomon have comparatively little interest for us; but that which *does* interest us, closely and personally, are the combats and triumphs in which Jesus Christ, our King, engages and overcomes with us, and in us, for the salvation of our souls and for the glory of God.

We must, therefore, pierce through the outward and historical meaning which lies upon the surface to reach the hidden spiritual and Christian meaning, which is not only the most important, but the only important teaching of the Psalms. The Christian who does not discover Jesus Christ beneath the outward letter, does not rightly understand what he reads. St. Augustine used to teach the people of Hipponium that Jesus Christ is to all the books of Holy Scripture, but especially to the Psalms, just what the soul is to the body; the historical portions, he added, have no other object than to represent and to manifest the mysteries of Jesus the Saviour, even as the wood of a lyre is only placed there by the workman in order to sustain the strings, and to cause them to vibrate beneath the touch of a skilful musician. "If therefore, in reciting the Psalm, you have there discovered Christ, you have found the true sense—*Si intellexisti Christum, tunc intellexisti*; if, on the contrary, you have not discovered Christ, you have not found the true sense—*Si Christum non intellexisti, non intellexisti.*" This observation is sufficient to make clear to us the divine significance of all the Psalms, and to teach us also that they are not easily understood. But it is very consoling to know that when we recite them as prayers they greatly glorify God, because Jesus Christ, who prays in us and with us, supplies for our ignorance by grasping in our stead the full purport of the words which He Himself inspired to His prophets. Jesus Christ praises and glorifies His Heavenly Father by these Psalms, in the name of the whole Church, in the name of all creation, in the name of heaven and earth; and in this we are greatly honoured, that our Lord has made choice of our lips and our poor faltering words as a living organ by means of which these

holy canticles may be ever echoed and repeated from one generation to another throughout succeeding ages. In reciting them, we must therefore, first of all, unite ourselves to Jesus, who, as St. Paul says, prays within us and in whom we pray—*Christus, in quo oramus*. It is far sweeter and more devotional to *sing* the Psalms than simply to recite them.

The same psalm has often many different meanings, all equally true. One example will be sufficient to explain this. Take, for instance, this short one which every one knows, the hundred and sixteenth—

Laudate Dominum, omnes gentes; laudate eum omnes populi. Quoniam confirmata est super nos misericordia ejus; et veritas Domini manet in eternum.

Praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye people. Because His mercy is confirmed upon us: and the truth of the Lord remaineth for ever.

First sense: It is the prayer which the Saviour uttered during the days of His mortal life, to express to His Heavenly Father the desires He offered up, as the Redeemer of mankind, that all the nations of the earth should acknowledge, bless, and love the one true God, and reap the benefits of the Redemption, and see the Lord reign over them for ever.

Second sense: The same prayer and the same desires offered up by Jesus Christ living in His Church, and gaining by her means all nations to the one true faith.

Third sense: It is the prayer of the Church, of the Pope, of the priests, and the faithful rejoicing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and calling upon all infidels and heretics to share in this great happiness with them.

Fourth sense: It is the prophetic cry of King David, who from afar hailed the future Messiah, Christ the Lord, and invited all nations, the Gentiles as well as the Jews, to adore Him, and to desire Him to reign over them; it is prophetic of the universal reign of Jesus Christ, and of His Church, at the end of time before the last judgment; it is prophetic of the return of the Jewish people, who, after having denied the Christ, shall be perfectly converted, and shall receive, through the mercy of God, the *confirmation* of the ancient promises.

Fifth sense: It is a prayer prophetic of the glory of Jesus Christ at His second coming, and of the joy of the

militant Church, which finds consolation in her present trials, and for the hardness of heart of so many people, by contemplating from afar the universal and eternal triumph of the true Solomon. This psalm is as certainly a prophecy for us as it was for David ; for it announces to us events which are not yet realised, namely, the entire and simultaneous conversion of *all* nations, the final return of the Jews and their restoration to all their ancient religious privileges, and lastly, the eternal reign of Jesus Christ, who is Himself the Truth, the Living and Incarnate Truth, *Veritas Domini*.

This beautiful psalm is also a canticle of sacred joy, and of acts of thanksgiving, by which we thank God for all the graces which He gives us.

By this short example we may judge a little of the spiritual treasures hidden in the Psalms.

We will give one other example, but in a few words only. The *Miserere* is known to every one. It is the cry of repentance, yet of sweet and humble confidence, which goes upward to the throne of God. 1st, from the Sacred Heart and the Divine Lips of Jesus, burdened with our sins, and asking pardon of God for the whole world's iniquity, of which He is the Victim ; 2d, from the Sacred Heart and the Divine Lips of Jesus, living in His Church, and through her doing penance for the sins of all mankind ; 3d, from the heart and lips of every Christian, of each poor sinner, first for his own sins, and then for those of his brethren. Much more might be added, but the little I have said will be sufficient to give to pious souls a key to many other Psalms. Let us therefore love to sing them, these sacred canticles of our Lord, in imitation of the faithful of the early Church. The melody to which the Church has set them is full of beauty, and yet so simple that the most ignorant can easily join in them. The tunes to which they are sung come from the East, and are of great antiquity. The singing of the Psalms lifts up the heart to God. The Church invites us *all* to sing ; and if some grow tired in Church, it is because they do not enter into the Catholic form of prayer, and do not sing with their brethren.

Our Lord Himself, in many psalms, invites us thus to sing His praises : "Sing, sing unto the Lord ! Sing with understanding : Let the whole earth sing the praises of God !—*Cantate Domino, omnis terra !*"

THE DIXIT DOMINUS.

THIS psalm, which is the hundred and ninth, is well known to the faithful, because the Church sings it always on Sundays and feast-days at the beginning of the evening office. It is a magnificent prophecy which exalts the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the conqueror of Satan in His own Divine Person at His first coming, and as the conqueror of Satan in His Church, and in all His elect throughout all ages, but especially at His second coming. "The Lord said to my Lord—*Dixit Dominus Domino meo.*" God the Father is Lord, as God the Son is Lord, as God the Holy Ghost is Lord; nevertheless the Son of God, having become the King of this world by the mystery of His Incarnation, is henceforth our Lord and Master by a double title; thus we say in the Creed, "I believe in One God the Father Almighty, . . . and in one *Lord* Jesus Christ" . . .

Jesus, notwithstanding His sacred humanity, by which He became the minister of God and His most perfect servant, is eternally equal in all things to the Father and the Holy Ghost. He is GOD, and as His humanity is united to His divinity in one indivisible Person who is Divine, Eternal, and Almighty, the Father says to His well-beloved Son, risen and ascending into heaven, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool—*Sede a dextris meis, donec ponam inimicos tuos scabellum pedum tuorum.*" God has neither right nor left, since He is a pure Spirit: the right hand of God signifies complete equality in power and glory, and a full participation in the eternal royalty of the Father. Neither is Jesus Christ seated in celestial glory; for heaven is an ineffable state, quite different to earth; even glorified bodies have no relation, no resemblance to what we see here below; thus, in heaven bodies no longer occupy space; they have an existence which St. Paul calls *spiritual, corpus spiritale*; a divine supernatural condition which finite minds cannot conceive, and from which it follows, amongst other things, that our Lord can be, and *is*, truly and entirely present in every consecrated Host in the whole world; and that in breaking or in moving the Sacred Host, the divine celestial Body of our Lord is neither moved nor broken.

“ We break the Sacrament ; but bold
 And firm Thy faith shall keep its hold ;
 Deem not the whole doth more unfold
 Than in the fractured part resides.
 Deem not the Christ doth broken lie,
 'Tis but the sign that meets the eye,
 The great unseen Reality
 In all its fulness still abides.”

The “*enemies*” of Jesus Christ are the impious, the unbelieving, the sinful, and all who wilfully oppose the law and the Church of God. At the present day, as in all ages, Jesus Christ has many enemies ; revolutionary spirits who attack the Papacy and the Church ; governments which endeavour to stamp out even the semblance of religion from their councils ; men who dive so deeply into the wonders of creation that they become bewildered by the very vastness of the divine conceptions, and end by denying the God from whom they have received the power to reason or think at all ; systems of education based upon the false assumption that any amelioration in the condition of the poor is to be effected by a purely secular teaching, which leaves those better, higher impulses that exist, even in the most degraded of mankind, neglected and uncultivated ; whilst the whole history of the human race will prove that religion and civilisation go ever hand in hand. And lastly, false Christians, unworthy Catholics, who attack or abandon what they profess to respect, and thus furnish dangerous weapons for the enemies of Jesus Christ and of His Holy Church.

The most terrible of all the enemies of Jesus will be the Antichrist ; St. Paul calls him “ the eldest son of Satan.” He will reign for a time over the whole earth ; he will persecute the Church ; he will call himself the Christ, and will work miracles by the power of Satan, “ insomuch as to deceive even the elect.” But at the moment when everything will seem to be lost, our Lord will appear in the majesty of His glory, and will crush His enemy, as well as his most guilty followers, and, as the psalm adds, “ Shall send forth the rod of His power out of Sion— *Virgam Virtutis tue emittet Dominus ex Sion.*” For, according to ancient traditions, it will be at Sion, upon Mount Calvary, that our Lord will for ever subdue the Antichrist and Satan ; and as at His first coming it was from Jerusalem

that the militant Church went forth to conquer the world and to fight the good fight, so, at the second coming (which will probably not be a moment, but an epoch like the first; an epoch of universal glory and triumph for the Holy Church; an epoch of repose after the combat; the Sabbath of the great week which will precede the Sunday of Eternity), so I say at the second coming of the Redeemer it is from Jerusalem, the Holy City, the city of Jesus and of Mary, that salvation, glory, and the life eternal shall be poured forth like a torrent of love over the whole earth. Then, Satan being vanquished and bound, as St. John says, all the world will be Christian; there will be only one fold and one Shepherd, and Jesus will reign supremely over all His creatures. It is this which is foretold in the Dixit Dominus: "Rule Thou," the Father says to Him, "in the midst of Thine enemies—*Dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.*" For the principle of all triumph, all strength, and all sanctity is in Thyself; *tecum principium*; Thou art the Lord.

"*In die virtutis tuæ, in splendoribus sanctorum*—In the day of Thy power, amid the brightness of the saints." This triumphal day of Jesus Christ is first the day of His resurrection and His glorious ascension; and still more is it the day of His second coming, the day of the great triumph and resurrection of His Church, when He shall establish her for ever, "amid the brightness of the saints." And the saints are all the elect, the great prophets, apostles, martyrs, and servants of Jesus Christ, who shall arise gloriously at the moment of His coming, and after having shared His combats shall participate in the triumph of their Head. If we are but faithful to our Lord till death, we shall reign with Him for ever.

The psalm adds to the glory of Jesus Christ these beautiful words, which proclaim His precedence over every creature, and His eternal Priesthood: "*Ex utero ante luciferum genui te. Juravit Dominus, et non pœnitebit eum: Tu es sacerdos in æternum*—From the womb before the day-star have I begotten Thee. (It is always God the Father who speaks to His Son.) The Lord hath sworn and will not repent: Thou art a Priest for ever." Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, the Son of God and of the Blessed Virgin, is, as St. Paul says, the first-born of every creature, not in the order of time, but in the order of grace,

and of the reign of God over His creatures. In this sense Jesus is the first and the chief ; He was before Mary, before David, before Abraham, before Adam and Eve, before every creature, before the light, before the Angels and before Lucifer, the first and highest of the Angels who refused to acknowledge and adore the Son of GOD in the Son of MARY, who desired to usurp the universal royalty of Jesus, and who, as a punishment for this sacrilege, was, and is, and will for ever be cast down from heaven to earth, vanquished by his Lord and our Lord Jesus Christ. At the second coming Lucifer and the world will both be vanquished by us, the living members of the King of glory.

Jesus Christ is "a Priest for ever," because He is the Mediator between God and men ; the Mediator who gives God to men and unites men to God, who offers to the Divine Majesty a perpetual sacrifice of adoration, thanksgiving, prayer, and pardon, who teaches truth and religion to men, who blesses, consoles, sanctifies and saves them : and such is the ministry of the priest. Jesus Christ is at the same time the great Creator, the living God, the only Lord, the King, the Priest, and the Saviour of men.

He is a Priest according to the order of Melchisedec, "*secundum ordinem Melchisedeche.*" Like unto the mysterious King of Salem, who offered up for Abraham a singular sacrifice of bread and wine, Jesus Christ instituted on Holy Thursday in the Cenaculum, under the form and the appearances of bread and wine, the sacrifice of the new alliance, in which He perpetually immolates Himself on our altars, until the end of the world, in the hands and by the ministry of His priests. Jesus is the eternal Priest and the Eucharistic Victim. His ministers are priests only because He communicates to them his own Divine Priesthood in the sacrament of Holy Orders. "*Dominus a dextris tuis : confregit in die vræ suæ reges.*" O Father omnipotent ! Thy Divine Son is therefore at Thy right hand, and it is He who shall overthrow kings in the day of His wrath. The day of God's wrath is, generally speaking, the day in which the sinner receives the punishment due to his sins, whether it be in this world or the next ; but it is more especially the day upon which Jesus shall come again in glory and shall strike with a single blow the Antichrist and the ten kings of whom the Scripture speaks. The

words of the psalm also refer to the fallen spirits with Satan at their head, whom our Lord shall cast down for ever upon that great and terrible day. Then Jesus shall become the sole Judge, the supreme Judge of all the nations of the earth; *judicabit in nationibus*. He will wholly destroy, from one end of the world to the other, all the works of the devil. He will annihilate all evil, and will establish everywhere that primitive order, that divine harmony which, in Eden, constituted the happiness of unfallen man; the whole earth will become upon this seventh day of the world the great terrestrial paradise, the great kingdom of Jesus Christ; and the joyful Church will forget, beneath the peaceful sceptre of the Divine Solomon, the cruel enemies whom she was forced to encounter in that onward march which led her to this perfect day, this great Easter-tide, this glorious resurrection! Her humiliations and her griefs are now no more; their measure will be henceforth the measure of her immutable glory; "*de torrente in via bibet, propterea exaltabit caput.*"

The accomplishment of this great prophecy is to be seen from the first conquest of Jesus Christ in the person of His martyrs, even until that day so greatly to be desired, when it will be perfectly accomplished by the complete and universal triumph of Jesus Christ, and of His Holy Church. With what sentiments of hope and Christian enthusiasm, with what lively and consoling faith should we sing this beautiful psalm, if we did but reflect a little on the great events which it proclaims.

LAUDATE, PUERI, DOMINUM

As this psalm recurs so often in the offices of the Church, we think it might be serviceable to give a short explanation of it here; it is the hundred and eleventh, and is a very beautiful and touching hymn of gratitude and love.

"Praise the Lord, ye children: praise ye the name of the Lord—*Laudate, pueri, Dominum; laudate nomen Domini.*" Who are these children of God? Who is the Lord? What is His holy Name? Jesus is the Lord, and it is *His* sacred Name which must be ever praised and blessed; for the *name* of any person is the sensible

sign which expresses, represents, and manifests him to the world. JESUS is the NAME of our God and King, that is to say, that Jesus our Lord expresses and manifests in His own Divine Person the one true living God, making God known to men, rendering God present in the midst of the world, and being Himself a visible, tangible, and perfect image of the great invisible Creator, of the God who, but through Jesus Christ, cannot be known or possessed by any creature, because, as St. Paul says, He "inhabitest light inaccessible." He who knows Jesus Christ, knows God; he who knows not Jesus Christ, knows not God, knows not the true Name of God; for Jesus is "the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance."

The children who are thus called upon to praise Jesus, to praise the living Name of God, and all angels, are all Christians, from the beginning to the end of time. Jesus is indeed for every creature the divine and human centre, create and uncreate, of the one true faith.

Hear the unfaltering response of all the servants of God, angels and men, to this invitation! *Sit nomen Domini benedictum, ex hoc nunc et usque in seculum*; Blessed be the name of the Lord: from this time forth for evermore! From the rising up of the sun, that is, from the day that Jesus triumphed over Satan, when the light shone in darkness, until the evening, yea, even until the end of time, we must praise our heavenly King, our Divine Lord, the well-beloved name of our well-beloved God: *A solis ortu usque ad occasum laudabile nomen Domini.*

And next, we have a prophecy of the Saviour's future reign over every nation: *Excelsus super omnes gentes Dominus, et super celos gloria ejus.* "The heavens" here spoken of are the angels; the holy angels whose celestial glory is infinitely beneath the glory of the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, and also the wicked angels who desired to usurp this incommunicable glory, and who for this crime are cast down to the lowest depths of hell. "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, and regardeth the things that are lowly in heaven and in earth? — *Quis sicut Dominus, Deus noster, qui in altis habitat? et humilia respicit in celo et in terra?*"

The more humble and lowly the creature, the more highly is he blessed and loved by the Creator; the more he abases himself, so much the more does God exalt him.

Jesus, in His Sacred Humanity, annihilated Himself before the majesty of His Father with a humility so perfect, so complete, so full of love, that He merited, as the Apostle said, to be exalted by His heavenly Father, and, even in His humanity, to share so completely in the glory and eternal royalty of God that in the name of Jesus, of the Word Incarnate, of the Son of Mary, every knee should bow in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. It is He who is *raised up from the earth*, and who, after suffering the deepest humiliation, takes His place among the angels above principalities and powers; *Suscitans a terra inopem, et de stercore erigens pauperem, ut collocet eum cum principibus populi sui.* And Jesus raises and lifts up to heaven all His servants who are meek and humble of heart as He was without vanity and without pride, *inopem et pauperem*; before all others, and above all others, He thus exalts, crowns and glorifies, the most humble Virgin Mary, the purest and holiest of creatures, because she was the lowliest; and His great servants both in heaven and earth, whose name and beatitude we venerate; the seraphims and archangels, Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael; in the ancient law, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Job, David, Isaiah, Daniel, and the other prophets; in the new law, St. John the Baptist, St. Joseph, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John, and all the Apostles; St. Mary Magdalen and St. Martha; and all those great saints who, from the very cradle of Christianity up to the present day, have shone as glorious luminaries in the firmament of holy Church.

Jesus, from the height of His glory, and from the depths of the holy tabernacle where He dwells in the blessed Eucharist, is the principle of the life and fecundity of His Church: the ancient Church, the Church of the Jews had life, and brought forth fruit so long as it believed in Him, from the time of Moses until the Incarnation, but since it rejected Him, it has become sterile, and has wandered throughout succeeding ages desolate and dishonoured. Before the second coming of the Saviour, and even before the coming of Antichrist, this Church will be converted, will return to her primitive faith, to the faith of the Prophets, to the faith of Abraham and of the holy Patriarchs, to the Christian Catholic faith; Jesus, by His grace, will draw her from the desert and bring her back once more to the Father's home. where. acknowledging the true

Messiah, she will find again with Him the principle of life and fecundity, of happiness and joy. This is prophesied in the last verse of the beautiful psalm we have explained: *Qui habitare facit sterilem in domo, matrem filiorum lætantem.*

THE DE PROFUNDIS.

THE De Profundis is the hundred and twenty-ninth psalm. From the origin of Christianity the Church has chosen it for the funeral chant, and the principal prayer at Christian burials. It is indeed a psalm full of hope and full of sweetness, and yet, at the same time, expressive of humility and sadness. As we recite it every day, or at least very often for the repose of the faithful departed, a brief explanation may be of some use. "*De profundis clamavi ad te Domine*—Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord!" And first, it is Jesus Christ who speaks thus, overwhelmed with all confusion, and annihilated before the infinite holiness of His Father; out of pure love for us He has taken upon Himself the weight of our iniquity; and this heavy weight which drags us down into the lowest depths of hell reduces our dear Lord and our most holy victim to the last degree of abasement of which a creature can be capable. "*De profundis*, out of the depths of this abyss of humiliation, Jesus cries to His Father: Lord, hear my voice, let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication!" *Domine exaudi vocem meam. Fiant aures tuæ intendentes in vocem deprecationis meæ.* The prayer of Jesus is always heard by the Father, because although He is the victim of sin, the well-beloved Son of Mary is ever the eternal object of the Father's complacency. The pardon that we could not obtain for ourselves, our Saviour asks and obtains for us. This is why, in reciting the *De Profundis*, we should unite ourselves interiorly to Jesus Christ dwelling within our hearts; this is a truth we cannot repeat too often.

As Jesus Christ is our God as well as our Advocate, we may also address to Him these beautiful words of the *De Profundis*: O Lord Jesus, out of the depths of my misery I lift up my voice unto Thee; deign to hear my prayer, O Thou who hast wept and suffered and died to deliver me from this abyss.

And lastly, the Church teaches us to sing these same words for the holy souls who are plunged in the terrible depths of purgatory; and by virtue of the Communion of Saints which unites into one body all the Christians of heaven, of earth, and of purgatory, we lend our lips and words to these poor suffering souls to obtain for them a speedy and perfect deliverance.

“*Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine, Domine quis sustenebit?* If Thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities: Lord, who shall abide it?” This is the utterance of true humility. This is indeed the cry of the poor sinner who acknowledges all his unworthiness, and abandons himself utterly to the infinite mercy of God! But as true humility is always accompanied with love and hope, the psalm immediately adds—“With Thee there is merciful forgiveness, and because of Thy law I have waited for Thee, O Lord. *Propter legem tuam.*” What is this law of God? For Jesus Himself it was the infinite love of the Father which permitted the Son of God to become our Saviour. “Because of Thy holy will, because of this law of love, my Father, I rejoice and hope, though sin reduces me to agony, to crucifixion, and to death, even the death of the cross!” For the Church militant and suffering, and for each one of us, “the law of the Lord” is the mystery of the Incarnation and the Redemption, it is Jesus Christ Himself; the Living Law of God, the only object of our hope, who alone can rescue us from the abyss of sin, from the abyss of purgatory. Jesus Christ, known, served, and loved, this is the law of God for humanity, this is the law of God for each one amongst us.

“My soul hath waited on His word; my soul hath hoped in the Lord.” “The Word of God” is again the Incarnate Word, in whom is “the light of men;” it is ever, it is always our dear Lord and Saviour in whom we trust for time and for eternity. “From the morning watch even until night: let Israel hope in the Lord—*a custodia matutina usque ad noctem speret Israel in Domino.*” In the Church on earth, and the Church in purgatory, we behold the true Israel, the true people of God. “From the morning watch,” that is to say, from the beginning of the world, from the days of Adam, Abel, and Seth, “until night,” until the end of time, the Church, and each one of her children, loves, hopes, and believes in Jesus Christ, and

through Him alone escapes finally from sin and the punishment that is due to it. In purgatory as upon earth, Israel confides in Jesus Christ, and by being united to Him in heaven will possess in eternity the infinite beatitude it has longed and waited for in time.

“For with the Lord there is mercy : and with Him is plenteous redemption.” His merits are infinite because they are divine ; and had there been many hundred millions more of sinful souls to save, to purify, to sanctify, the precious blood of Jesus would have flowed ever superabundantly, and would have clothed them all with grace and glory in the presence of the justice of God. It will be He, it will be Jesus who on earth and in purgatory shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities : “*Et ipse redimet Israel ex omnibus iniquitatibus ejus.*”

The De Profundis is therefore a cry of hope, a prayer of love coming forth from the Sacred Heart to be re-echoed by our own ; and whilst hoping for ourselves, we must hope also for our suffering brethren in purgatory, and we have confidence that if we pray with our whole hearts, our merciful Lord will soon deliver these souls, still dearer to Him than ourselves, and will admit them perfectly purified into peace and eternal rest. “*Et ipse redimet Israel de iniquitatibus ejus.*”

THE MAGNIFICAT.

THE *Magnificat* is the canticle of thanksgiving inspired by the Holy Ghost to the Blessed Virgin when, after the Annunciation, Mary went to visit her holy cousin Elizabeth, bearing in her virginal womb the Incarnate Son of God.

Elizabeth, at the age of nearly eighty years, had miraculously become the mother of the future precursor of the Messiah, and had been commanded by the angel Gabriel to give to this child of grace and benediction the mysterious name of JOHN, signifying in Hebrew *full of grace*. As soon as she perceived Mary, St. Elizabeth felt the infant leap in her womb for joy, coming forth to meet the Blessed Virgin who represented the new alliance and the Christian Church, which possesses, contains, and gives Jesus to the world. Elizabeth represented the ancient alliance, the Jewish Church, Mother of the prophets and of the precursor.

The very approach of Jesus and of Mary immediately filled with the Holy Ghost both the mother and the son. St. John the Baptist was presanctified, that is to say, cleansed from original sin in his mother's womb, just as, from the beginning of the human race; Adam, Abel, Seth, Noah, Abraham, and the other holy patriarchs—Moses, Aaron, Josuah, David, Isaias, and the other holy prophets, as well as all the faithful of the Old Testament, had been presanctified by their faith and hope in the Christ who was to come. Elizabeth, enlightened interiorly as to the mystery of the Incarnation and the divine maternity of Mary, adored Jesus in the womb of the Virgin Mother, crying with humility and love: "Whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" And Mary being also filled with the Holy Ghost, who, by the sacred indwelling of her Divine Son, completely inundated her most pure soul, replied: "*Magnificat anima mea Dominum; my soul doth magnify the Lord.*" I glorify God the Father who has chosen me for His Spouse, and has made me the Mother of His Eternal Son whom He eternally begets in His infinite glory; I glorify God the Son who has become my Son, my Child, whom I bear within me, to whom I give my flesh, my blood, and my own substance, who, perfect God as He is, my Creator and my Lord, is yet my little Child, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; I glorify God the Holy Ghost, who fills me with His light, with heavenly love, with all His gifts, with all His graces, who has rendered my virginity miraculously fruitful, and who has worked within me the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation, the central point of religion, the groundwork of creation, the salvation and redemption of sinners, the principle and the end of all things. My soul doth magnify the Lord! "*Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo; and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.*" Peace and joy dwell in the faithful souls where Jesus Christ reposes; the holiest soul is always the most peaceful, the most serene, and the most joyful; love, peace, and joy, with patience, goodness, tenderness, constancy, gentleness, fidelity, modesty, purity, and chastity, are the blessed fruits of the Spirit in a truly Christian soul. What then must have been the joy of the Blessed Virgin, that perfect joy of which Jesus Himself was the most pure source? Jesus her Saviour! Jesus was

indeed most truly the Saviour of Mary, not in the sense that He purified her as He purifies us from original and actual sin, and thus opened to her the gate of heaven, but in the sense that by His Divine merits He preserved her absolutely from all stain, all sin, all imperfection.

“*Quia respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ*; Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid.” The Blessed Virgin was the humblest of all creatures, and for this reason was she chosen by God. She knew and clearly saw by the light of faith that she was nothing before God, that she depended absolutely upon Him in soul and body, in mind and will, in all her powers and in her very existence, and living in this perfect dependence she annihilated, and completely forgot herself in every detail of her life, so completely as to think only of God, to follow only the will of God, to live only for God, in one word to *belong* to God alone; and that with a deep and tender love. Such is Christian humility, which seeth not itself from seeing only God, but which is regarded by God with Divine complacency. The Blessed Virgin speaks of herself here and at all times as “the handmaid” of the Lord; and well might she call herself this; for this reason it was, and because of this truth, this justice, this simplicity, that God chose her from amongst all others to be His glorious Mother, the Sovereign Mistress of angels and of men, the Queen of the Church, and the Queen of heaven. The more meek and humble we are, so much the more will Jesus love and regard us with favour, and dwell within our hearts.

“*Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.*”—*BEATA* means both holy and blessed; this is why the Church calls *Mary* both the “*Holy Virgin*” and the “*Blessed Virgin*.” All Christian generations from the first unto the last have called, and are still calling, and shall for ever call her blessed; thus regarding with transports of faith and hope and love, with perfect reverence and tender confidence, the Mother of the Saviour, the Mother of Jesus Christ, the Mother of God. And now can it be that they who neither love nor honour her can form a part of the “*generations*” which, springing here below from the fruitful bosom of the Church, are destined to become hereafter, on the day of their true birth, which is the day of death, children in the heavenly home, children

in the eternal kingdom of which MARY is the well-beloved Queen ?

“*Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est.*—He that is mighty hath done great things unto me.” Yes, verily ! so great that no creature either in heaven or on earth shall be able to fathom the depth, nor to comprehend the infinite and divine extent of these mysteries and graces. And yet all may be summed up in a single name : the Holy Name of JESUS ! Behold what the Blessed Trinity, the living God, in His almighty power and infinite goodness, hath “done unto Mary.” Jesus Christ ; the mystery of mysteries, the beginning, the principle, the end of the natural order, of the spiritual order, and of the Divine order ; eternity in time, and time united to eternity ; the Divine Life becoming *our* life, even ours ; man becoming the Son of God ; yea, becoming GOD, the only living God who with the Father and the Holy Ghost reigneth for ever and ever. . . . Behold what God hath done unto Mary, unto Mary the Mother of God. All other graces bestowed upon the Blessed Virgin are indeed but the consequence and the radiation of that fundamental grace which is her Divine Maternity, or, in other words, the mystery of the Incarnation, even Jesus Christ.

“*Et sanctum nomen ejus ;* and holy is His name.” Jesus is holy, He only is holy, the Holy One of God, who sanctifieth the saints. The Divine Son of Mary is the source of the holiness of the Church and of each one of her members ; Mary herself, who gives Jesus to us, is the channel of all holiness and grace.

“*Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies timentibus eum ;* and His mercy is from generation to generation unto them that fear Him.” But not to the unbelieving and the indifferent, not to those who pass blameless in the eyes of the world, though they live as if there were no God, no Saviour, and no Church. We must fear God as well as love Him ; we must fear to offend Him, we must fear His justice, even whilst we perfectly confide in the tenderness of His compassionate love. It is thus that Christians live, keeping their conscience pure from sin and hoping ever in the Divine mercy. Thus they lived under the old dispensation even as under the new ; and the “mercy of God,” which is but the grace of pardon and salvation brought into this world by Jesus Christ, was ex-

tended to the human race, *a progenie in progenies*, from Adam till the Deluge, from Noah until Moses, from Moses until the Incarnation, from the Incarnation until the end of the world. Jesus Christ is the living Mercy of God the Father, and it is the office of His Church, as well as of His blessed Mother, to dispense this mercy, and to prove herself the true Mother of mercy and love.

“*Fecit potentiam in brachio suo; dispersit superbos mente cordis sui*; God hath showed strength with His arm: He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart.” The “proud,” who have rebelled against God, thus obliging Him to crush them with the strength of His arm, are, first of all, those rebel angels, with Lucifer at their head, who would neither submit nor obey; they said: “*Non serviam*, I will not submit” to the Son of Mary, to the Incarnate Word, to Jesus Christ; and Jesus, the “Arm of God,” the omnipotent minister of the Father’s will, cast them down from heaven to hell. The “proud” are also those rebellious men who set themselves up in opposition to Jesus Christ, to His Church, to His holy law, and causing earth to echo the fatal formula of hell, repeat also in their turn, either in words or in works: “I will not obey.” At the last judgment the “Arm of God” will be uplifted to fall with terrible, eternal weight upon every impenitent sinner. May the sweet and lowly Virgin Mary preserve us from the curse of pride, and may the “Arm of God,” the Sacred Hand of Jesus, pierced by our iniquities, never be extended over our heads except to bless us and uplift us to the bosom of the Father.

“*Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles*; He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble.” This is but a repetition of the same thought. The “mighty,” whom Jesus Christ casts down and scatters like the dust, are fallen angels and sinful men, and the humble whom He exalts are those faithful Christians who suffer persecution for justice sake, and whom the world despises because they are like their Master, meek and humble of heart.

“*Esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit inanes*; He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away.” In this world the disciples of the Saviour must pass through the furnace of penance, tribulation, and tears. “We are fools for Christ’s sake,” said the

Apostle St. Paul : " deceivers and yet true ; unknown and yet known ; dying and behold we live ; chastised and not killed ; sorrowful yet always rejoicing ; having nothing and possessing all things." But the worldly, who know not Jesus, do, on the contrary, appear rich whilst having nothing ; powerful whilst they love only misery and vanity ; happy whilst they have completely wandered from the path of happiness. Jesus is the only principle of true happiness, the only source of joy ; He bestows His imperishable gifts upon those who, for His love, renounce the fleeting pleasures of the world ; and upon that day when He shall mete out justice, those worthless treasures which men amass with so much care shall be torn for ever from their failing grasp. Ah ! in eternity how well we shall comprehend this twofold truth. He who has Jesus has everything, he who has not Jesus has nothing !

" *Suscepit Israel puerum suum, recordatus misericordiæ suæ* ; He hath upholden His servant Israel : being mindful of His mercy." In the past God chose a nation whom He treated as a favoured servant and a well-beloved child ; this nation, this Israel, was to give the Christ, the Lord, the Saviour to the other nations of the world. The Blessed Virgin clearly proclaims in the Magnificat that the time has arrived, and that the day of glory has dawned upon Israel. Alas, for the unhappy Jewish nation ! A small number alone comprehended this glory, opened their eyes to the light of this glorious day, and reaped the blessed fruits of the mystery of mercy, of the Incarnation and Redemption of Jesus Christ. At the end of time, Israel, the prodigal child, shall return to the Father's home ; Jesus, the Good Shepherd of the human race, shall receive it as He formerly received the Gentile nations, and will be mindful of His mercy, as is foretold by all the Prophets and Fathers of the Church. The Blessed Virgin, who forms the meeting-point between the Old Testament and the New, establishes and renews this consoling prophecy, the fulfilment of which commenced by the first coming of the Saviour, and will be perfectly accomplished by the conversion of the Jews. For the divine canticle terminates with these words : "*Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros : Abraham et semini ejus in secula*—As He spake unto our fathers : to Abraham and his seed for ever." The Lord who had thus promised to Abraham that in his seed all

the nations of the earth should be blessed (*viz.*, in the Christ who was to spring from his race), was indeed He who, now incarnate in the womb of Mary, was soon to give Himself to the world through her, and thus partly to accomplish the prophecies which He had Himself inspired, *ad patres nostros*. And at the end of time it will be again through Mary, the Immaculate Virgin, that Jesus Christ will complete the accomplishment of all that the Scriptures foretell; He will make her the channel of the grace which shall convert the Jews, and sanctify in a marvellous way the faithful of the latter days; and He will reign first here below and then in heaven with His Blessed Mother, unto all eternity, *in secula*.

The Magnificat is part of the Gospel of St. Luke, and is taken from the second chapter. It is a prayer which is wholly divine, and should be often sung and recited; and after Communion, when the same Lord who dwelt with Mary when she uttered this holy canticle is dwelling also in your heart, you cannot choose a better act of thanksgiving than the Magnificat.

THE LAMPS OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

LIGHT has always occupied a prominent place in the worship of God. The reason of this fact is a very deep one; but as we do not wish to enter fully into the subject here, it is sufficient to say that light is the most perfect of created substances, that it is the symbol of truth which enlightens the intelligence, and that our Lord Jesus Christ declared with His own Divine lips that He was "the true Light," and the "Light of the world."

For these reasons, and many others, light has always been amongst Christians an integral part of their outward worship, and particularly of all that relates to the mystery of the Holy Eucharist. From the time of the Apostles, when the early Christians were forced to take refuge in the Catacombs and other secret asylums, and to hide their sacred gatherings from all eyes, lights were never omitted; and from that distant time the Church has always shown a special regard for the custom of burning lights during the celebration of the Mass and the divine offices, and also in the veneration which is paid to holy images and the relics of the martyrs.

In the Catacombs of Rome there have been found, amongst others, magnificent lamps in gold, silver, and brass in the form of wreaths of flowers, in each of which were burned, before the bodies of the martyrs, a certain number of wicks, replenished day and night by the devotion of the faithful. These luminous crowns were suspended from the vaults of the chapels of the Catacombs, and honoured by their brilliancy the sacred relics of those pontiffs, virgins, and martyrs who had remained faithful unto death to Jesus the Light of the World.

When, after centuries of persecution, the Church could openly display the pomp and grandeur of her ritual, light once more formed an important part of the religious ceremonial. Popes, Christians, and numbers of the faithful, following their example, brilliantly illuminated the new churches with costly lamps, accompanied with endowments for supplying them perpetually with pure oil and light. And thus it is that, fifteen centuries after, we may still see a hundred and forty lamps surrounding, as with a brilliant aureole, the venerable tomb of the Prince of the Apostles, in the basilica of St. Peter at Rome. Forty lamps, always lighted, burn before the relics of St. Cecilia, virgin and martyr; and indeed relics are never exposed at Rome for the veneration of the faithful without being honoured by lights.

If this is the case with the relics of the saints, we may easily conceive the solicitude with which the Church has always watched to supply at least *one* burning lamp before the Sacred Body of our Lord, truly present in the Holy Eucharist; here, again, Rome proves herself the mistress of Catholic devotion, and nothing can be more striking than the effect of the seven lamps which burn in the great churches of Rome before the altar of the Blessed Sacrament.

It is indeed to be desired that everywhere, in the smallest chapel where the Adorable Body of Jesus Christ reposes, the priest and the faithful should have the means constantly to supply a lamp as a mark of their faith in the mystery of mysteries. Coldness of heart, religious indifference, and want of a lively faith must, alas! prevent any manifestation as rich and as costly as in the Holy City; but it is at least necessary that one lamp should burn night and day before the Blessed Sacrament, and

thus recall to those who enter the Church the Sacred Presence of our Lord, and bear witness to the faith and devotion of His children.

In poor country parishes where the priest with his limited means has barely sufficient to supply the wants of those around him and his own simple requirements, why should not some pious women and young girls form an association for the purpose of keeping up the lamps before the Blessed Sacrament in their parish church? One might bring a little oil, and another some wicks, and another might come morning and evening to clean and trim the lamps. The principal person in the association would receive the little subscriptions, the pennies and halfpennies, which would thus make this little work a work for all, for the poor as well as for the rich, and even for little children; and the good priest would be happy in seeing his parishioners anxious to aid him in this simple yet holy action. Soon, without doubt, great blessings would accompany these *servants* of the Blessed Sacrament, and religion would flourish in desolate districts which seem abandoned by God.

The Sovereign Pontiff Pius IX., animated by a deep and tender devotion to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, attached a particular importance to keeping lamps always lighted before the tabernacles. He even enriched with an indulgence of seven years every act of piety, whatever it might be, by which the faithful should cooperate in this good work. Thus the poor woman, the poor workman who can do no more, may gain the precious grace of indulgences by giving a drop of oil, a penny, or even a farthing, to honour the most Holy Sacrament. May the faith and zeal of all be reanimated, and may the Blessed Sacrament of the love of God upon earth be everywhere praised, honoured, and glorified!

INDULGENCES AND JUBILEES.

A JUBILEE is an *indulgence*.

The word *indulgence* is derived from the Latin, and signifies *to show mercy, to abstain from severity*. An indulgence is a grace which the Church grants, in the name of Jesus Christ, to repentant sinners whose sins have been

already remitted in the Sacrament of penance. After our sins are pardoned, we must still pay that debt of temporal punishment by which they must be expiated, either in this world or in purgatory. Well, an indulgence is either an entire or a partial remission of this expiation. It does not dispense us from the necessity of doing penance, but it supplies what is wanting through the imperfection of our penances.

In granting indulgences the Pope acts like the steward of some great lord, who having received full power from his master to manage his affairs, remits the whole of an enormous debt to some debtor who in spite of all his efforts would only have been able to pay a small part.

The Pope says to us, in the name of the Son of God, "Do your best to expiate your sins and to serve God, and by the authority of Him who has said to me: *Whatever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven*, I remit the rest of your debt which you will not be able to discharge yourself."

A JUBILEE is the greatest of all the indulgences which the Church grants to her children. It is a special season of grace and pardon. The word signifies *joy, gladness, liberty*.

Formerly a jubilee was only proclaimed every hundred years, but now, in order that all may profit by it, the Popes have changed this time to every twenty-five years. The Sovereign Pontiffs are also accustomed to grant them upon the occasion of any great joy or affliction in the Church.

The opening of a jubilee in Rome is one of the most impressive sights. The Pope goes, in procession, with a long train of attendants to the Holy Gate, which is one of the gates of the Church of St. Peter. With a silver hammer he strikes three times on the wall which holds this closed gate; the wall is then pulled down by masons, and the Holy Father passes through the first, followed by the Cardinals and the numerous procession which accompanies him. At the end of the jubilee, the Pope having blessed the stones and cement intended to rebuild the wall, lays the first stone himself with a silver trowel, and the jubilee ends with a solemn benediction given to the immense crowd which always assists at these grand ceremonies.

The whole of this ceremonial is symbolical, like all others in the Christian worship. It signifies that the Pope, by the power he has received from God to loose from sin, really opens the gate of heaven to those who are truly humble and contrite of heart.

In order to gain the indulgence of the jubilee, we must fulfil all the works directed by the Sovereign Pontiff, and with the intention he designs.

These works are usually confession, communion, visits to some churches, fasting, and almsgiving. Each bishop publishes the jubilee in his diocese with special regulations as to the good works required, and the time for gaining the jubilee.

The almsgiving is obligatory for every one ; for the poor as well as for the rich, but a *penny*, a *farthing* even, is sufficient for the poor.

The jubilee cannot be gained by the Easter Communion except by special permission from the Pope ; but one confession will suffice to fulfil the Easter obligation, and also to gain the jubilee.

Those who are sick may obtain from their confessors a commutation of the fasting and the visits to the churches. Children who have not made their first communion may gain the jubilee without fasting and communion, simply by confession, almsgiving, and visiting the churches.

The indulgence of the jubilee being a grace, no one is *obliged* to gain it ; but it would be a sin to neglect so great a benefit through indifference or incredulity.

We hope that all our readers sufficiently understand their own interest to gain their jubilee. What happiness at the moment of death to have nothing more to pay to the infinite justice of God, and to have nothing in perspective but the immediate enjoyment of the happiness of heaven.

THE SCAPULAR.

IN Latin the word *scapula* means *shoulder* ; and for many centuries the garment which all workmen wore over their clothes to preserve them from wear and from stains, was called for this reason a *scapular*. It was formed of two wide bands of stuff which joined on the shoulders, and reached to the knees both back and front, leaving a hole

in the middle for the head to pass through. But it is very long since this kind of garment was commonly worn, and the scapular has become a religious insignia established by the Carmelites in the thirteenth century. The Carmelite Order, instituted in the earlier ages of Christianity, and always characterised by a special devotion to the Blessed Mother of God, was obliged to abandon the ancient monastery of Mount Carmel in Palestine to avoid the fury of the Turks.

The Carmelite monks took refuge in Europe, where they met with many difficulties, so much so that the Order seemed about to perish, when St. Simon their superior made a last appeal to heaven to prevent this catastrophe. Redoubling his austerities and his prayers, he offered himself anew with all his brethren to the glorious queen of heaven, entreating her to come to their aid. His confidence was well founded, and in these words the holy Religious related to his brethren the result of his prayer: "My beloved brethren, blessed be God, who never abandons those who hope in Him, and does not despise the prayer of His servants; and blessed be also the Most Holy Virgin, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, who being mindful of His mercy towards His people, makes haste to help us in the midst of the great tribulations which surround us on all sides! To me who am only dust and ashes, as I opened my heart in the presence of God, and asked the Blessed Virgin to grant some unmistakable sign of her protection and love to the ancient religious family of the Carmelites, whom she herself had honoured with the title of *Brethren of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, . . . to me the Holy Mother of God deigned to appear, resplendent with glory, and holding in her hand a mysterious SCAPULAR: 'Receive, my son,' she said to me, 'this vestment which shall be henceforth the distinguishing mark of the Order of Mount Carmel and of my confraternity; it shall be a powerful safeguard to thee and to all thy brethren. Whoever shall live a holy life, and die a holy death wearing this sacred habit, shall avoid the flames of hell, and shall ever be accompanied by my maternal protection.'

The Religious were all eager to be invested with this scapular, which thus became the glorious livery of the Blessed Virgin; and the Sovereign Pontiffs, approving this

pious institution, have enriched with many indulgences not only the Order of the Carmelites, but also a confraternity of the faithful living in the world, and wearing also, beneath their ordinary attire, the scapular of the Blessed Virgin.

It may be easily understood that it then became necessary to modify the size of the ancient scapular, and to replace it by two pieces of brown cloth, united by two cords passing over the shoulders. For us, as for the Religious of Mount Carmel, the scapular is a sacred warrant of the protection of the Holy and Immaculate Mother of God, during the whole of our life, and particularly at the moment of death.

Nevertheless, in order to share in the special benedictions promised by the Blessed Virgin, and to gain the indulgences granted by the Sovereign Pontiffs, it is not sufficient merely to wear this simple insignia ; it is also necessary to be invested with the scapular by a Carmelite, or a priest duly authorised by the Holy See. But it is still more necessary to remember one thing, without which it would be useless to wear all the scapulars in the world ; and that is, that if you do not lead a Christian life, if you violate the commandments of God and the laws of His Church, and especially if you profane by immorality this Sacred Scapular bestowed by the most chaste, most holy, and immaculate Virgin Mary, you will not escape the terrible judgments of God, and the promises of the Blessed Mother of God will pass to others who are more worthy.

Receive if possible, and as soon as possible, the holy scapular. The priest who invests you will gladly explain more fully than I can do here the graces with which the Church has enriched the Carmelite Confraternity, and particularly the numerous indulgences attached to it. Amongst others there is a plenary indulgence to be gained upon the day of reception.

THE THIRD ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS.

ST. FRANCIS of Assisi and St. Dominic were raised up by Divine mercy at the beginning of the thirteenth century to sustain the Church, shaken for more than two hundred years by the impious wars waged by the Em-

perors and Kings who called themselves Christian, against the Sovereign Pontiffs, the vicars of Jesus Christ, the supreme heads of the Holy Church, and the divinely-appointed defenders of the true liberty of nations, as well as of the true authority of princes. In the midst of all these troubles, a certain laxity gradually crept into discipline and morals, and it became day by day more necessary that God should raise up in the midst of His people heroic souls capable of uniting all the elements of resurrection and of salutary reform, and rendering them victorious.

St. Dominic, a Spaniard by birth, was sent by our Lord to accomplish the first half of this great task ; St. Francis of Assisi, who merited by his heavenly life the title of *Seraphic*, accomplished the second, and, with his holy friend, renewed the face of the earth.

St. Francis was born at Assisi, a little town of the Papal States, towards the end of the twelfth century. He was smitten with a holy love for evangelical poverty ; he gave up all his possessions, humiliated and annihilated himself according to the example of his Saviour, changed his rich garments for a coarse woollen habit, girded himself with a cord, and going forth barefooted as a poor Religious of Jesus Christ, having for his only riches Jesus in his heart, he began preaching penance everywhere, and soon saw gathering round him, not only hundreds, but thousands and thousands of disciples, who walked with enthusiasm in his steps, and recalled, by their austere and angelical life, the life of the early Christians. The Pope, in approving the idea of the seraphic Father Francis, named these new Religious *Fratres minores* (the little Brothers). The Gospel was their only rule : poverty, humility, meekness, penance, simplicity, indefatigable zeal for the salvation of others, and especially for the sanctification of the poor and lowly, an absolute allegiance to the Sovereign Pontiff and the Church, a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and, above all, an *excess* of love for the sweet Saviour Jesus, the King of the Church, and the Light of the world : such was their spirit.

The good St. Francis, aided by St. Clare of Assisi, had established for women the same institute of penance, and the converts of these Daughters of Poverty, afterwards called the Poor Clares, multiplied rapidly.

St. Francis was inspired to found a third Order of

Penance for Christians living in the world, both priests and laity, that they also might participate individually in the spirit of evangelical renovation and religious sanctification which produced such marvellous fruits in the convents of the Poor Clares, and the monasteries of the Friars Minor. This is what is called the *Third Order of St. Francis*, which has been solemnly approved by the Holy See ; it was rapidly propagated throughout all the countries of the Catholic world, and, for six centuries and a half, it has enrolled within its ranks millions of holy souls.

Nothing can be more simple than the rule of the Third Order of St. Francis : intended for all conditions of the secular life, instituted for the rich as well as for the poor, for ecclesiastics and for military men, for merchants and for women in society ; fitted for all ages : it is adapted, like the Gospel itself, to all our necessities of position, health and fortune. Besides the fact that it imposes no obligation under pain of sin, it accommodates itself to all particular cases, owing to the permission given by the Holy Founder to all the Fathers of the First Order, and also to the confessor of each Tertiary, to commute the different requirements according to circumstances. Indeed, the one thing needful in the Third Order is the *Spirit*—the spirit of penance, the spirit of detachment, and Christian poverty, the spirit of simplicity and love in religion ; whilst the practices and means pointed out by the rule are only of secondary importance, and completely subordinate to the principal object. I will even add that society being what it is, there are few people living in the world who can exactly observe all the rule of the Third Order. Therefore, if it is evident that owing to your health, or the requirements of your position, you can only observe a part of this rule, must you therefore refrain from entering the Third Order ? Certainly not ; from the moment in which you desire to do all you can, from the moment that St. Francis sees in your heart the *will* to do penance, and to love our dear Lord truly, he opens his heart to you, he holds out his arms to you, and calls you into the sacred ranks of his Third Order, which will strengthen your holy aspirations and bring them to perfection.

As regards corporal penance, the rule imposes three obligations. First, to wear always night and day the

woollen scapular and the cord of St. Francis. No one can be dispensed from this first obligation which cannot affect the health. Second, to abstain on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. Third, to fast on Friday. Many Tertiaries cannot fulfil these two last conditions. They obtain a dispensation, and their confessor imposes some other work of piety or mortification by which they may satisfy the obligation; for instance, to assist at mass, to say six *paters*, *aves*, and *glorias* for the souls in Purgatory, of which we shall speak presently, or to give alms, or to go to communion for that intention, &c. As regards prayers, the rule imposes upon Tertiaries who can read, the daily recital of the little office of the Blessed Virgin according to the Roman Ritual; and upon those who cannot read, a certain number of Our Fathers, and Hail Marys.

The little office is also often commuted to shorter and easier prayers; some decades of the Rosary for instance, or the daily recitation of the *Miserere*, with the arms extended in the form of a cross, &c. Priests and Religious satisfy by their office, directing their intention.

Incomparable graces ever accompany the children of St. Francis. The Church has crowned them with benedictions, and has opened to them with incredible bounty the treasure of her indulgences. A plenary indulgence on the day of reception, a plenary indulgence at the hour of death, a *daily* plenary indulgence for the recitation of the chaplet of St. Francis, consisting of seven decades and three Hail Marys, in memory of the seventy-three years of the Blessed Virgin's life; a plenary indulgence also for the recitation of thirty-three *Pater Nosters* and *Ave Marias*, in memory of the thirty-three years of our Lord's Life on earth; a plenary indulgence to those who approach Holy Communion on the Feasts of our Lord, of the Blessed Virgin, of the Apostles, and of all the Saints of the Order who are very numerous, sometimes twelve and fifteen in a month; and lastly, a number of plenary and partial indulgences, given in the Manual of the Third Order, amongst which are the six *Paters*, *Aves*, and *Glorias*, to the recitation of which the Holy See has deigned to attach *all* the plenary and partial indulgences of the Sanctuaries of the Holy Land and the Churches of Rome. These indulgences are so extensive that it is impossible to enumerate them.

Every Tertiary may gain them many times a day, as

often as he shall recite with devotion these six Paters, Aves, and Glorias, for the intentions of the Pope, the needs of the Church, and in honour of the seraphic St. Francis. This is what is called the *great pardon*. Almost all the indulgences of the Third Order are applicable to the souls in Purgatory. Our Lord promised St. Francis that his triple spiritual family should endure to the end of the world. At the time that he received the sacred stigmata of the crucifixion upon Mount Alverno, he was wrapt in ecstasy during the whole night, in a grotto where he went to pray. His companion and cherished disciple, whom he loved to call "the little sheep of God," because of his meekness and innocence, surprised him in the midst of this great ecstasy. Hearing him speak, and seeing the reflection of the heavenly light which filled the grotto, Brother Leo ventured to advance towards the opening, and was thus the happy witness of the wonders of that sacred night. His seraphic father, lifted from the earth as though suspended in the air, seemed enveloped in an immense flame which lighted up all the interior of the cavern; he spoke, and a voice answered him; but Brother Leo could not understand the mysterious words. . . . Having remarked three different times that St. Francis put his hand in his bosom as if to take something out, and afterwards offered it in the flame to Him who spoke to him, Brother Leo acknowledged to his good father quite simply the next morning that he had seen what had passed, and, asking him to forgive his presumption, begged him to explain it. "Brother Leo," answered St. Francis, "Brother Leo, little sheep of God, since thou hast surprised my secret, I will tell thee all. The divine flame which enveloped me during the night was the Holy Ghost, and in the midst of it my Saviour Jesus Christ deigned to appear to me, and to speak to me familiarly as a friend speaking to his friend. . . . He said to me, 'Francis, give Me all thou hast;' and I answered: 'O my sweet Lord, I have nothing left; I have renounced everything for Thy love; I have nothing but this poor torn robe; wouldst Thou that I should give it Thee?' And then He commanded me to put my hand in my breast and give Him all I should find. I obeyed, and found to my great surprise a beautiful piece of gold, which I presented to Him immediately: 'How can it be?' I said, 'I believed that I had nothing.' 'Seek again,' replied my

Lord ; and I sought and found a second piece of gold, which I gave Him like the first. And yet a third time He told me to seek, and I found and gave to Him. And when I uttered my surprise at finding gold in my possession who had made myself His own poor servant for His love, Jesus said to me : 'Because thou hast given Me everything, I give everything to thee. Thou hast given Me three families of faithful disciples : as a reward I give three promises to thee to-day. First, thy three Orders shall endure until the end of the world ; secondly, at the hour of death I will assist with special love all those who shall belong to them ; thirdly, I will bless and love all who shall love them.' It was thus that my Lord spoke to me. But say nothing, Brother Leo, until the day when it shall be necessary to speak."

Such is the Third Order of St. Francis of Assisi, the great religious family into which all faithful souls desirous of obtaining true sanctification in the midst of the temptations of the world are lovingly invited.

Pius IX. was a Tertiary of St. Francis. Many cardinals, bishops, princes, and princesses have enjoyed, and still enjoy, the same happiness. St. Louis, St. Ferdinand, king of Spain, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Margaret of Cortona, St. Francis of Sales, the venerable Abbé Olier, founder of the seminaries in France, and a number of great men, warriors, artists, and poets, have been Tertiaries of St. Francis. Michael Angelo was a Tertiary, and also Dante, who desired to be buried in the habit of St. Francis. The holiest priest of the time, the saintly Curé d'Ars, belonged to this Order. France, Italy, and Spain are filled with Tertiaries, and even the most distant missions are reaping this spiritual advantage, and behold beneath the shadow of the cross, newly planted by the Franciscan Fathers, great numbers of the faithful enrolling themselves under the banner of the seraphic patriarch.

But at the present time, more especially, the Third Order should be honoured and loved by the true children of God. It is directly opposed to all the evils of the day, and its spirit, which is the spirit of the Gospel ; and the Church is a direct antidote to that fatal influence which the enemies of the Catholic faith desire to represent as the spirit of social and religious progress. Modern society will have nothing to do with penance, especially with outward

and corporal penance : it speaks of nothing but pleasure and luxury, of commerce and money-making ; the dream of the age is of liberty and independence, falsely so called ; whilst it is losing day by day the spirit of Christianity, the spirit of Catholicity, of reverence for the Holy See, and for ecclesiastical, secular, and paternal authority ; and increasing every day in pride, self-sufficiency, and egotism. . . . St. Francis presents to us in the Third Order the immediate remedy, the counterpoise, to all these deplorable tendencies : a Christian life, penitent and seriously penitent ; detachment from worldly vanities, and principally from money, the god of the age ; simplicity in the midst of worldly employments, humility and obedience ; practical devotion to the Sovereign Pontiff, and respect for all legitimate authority, whether in the Church, the State, or the family ; Christian love for the poor and lowly ; in a word, the spirit of the Gospel, the spirit of faith, of love to our Blessed Lord, to His Adorable Sacrament, and to His Immaculate Mother.*

* Any one desiring to enter the Third Order need only apply to one of the Capuchin or Franciscan Fathers, who will give the postulant all necessary details, and receive him first as a novice, and afterwards as a Tertiary. If there are no Franciscans within reach to whom you can apply, it would be sufficient to write to the Rev. Father Provincial of the Capuchins or Franciscans, and ask him to delegate any priest you may name to perform the ceremony of admission.

FIFTH PART.



THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS.

A MIRACLE is an outward fact which evidently surpasses the forces of nature. It is the *extraordinary* exercise of God's almighty power in the world.

To deny the possibility of miracles is to deny the power of God, and consequently His existence.

Miracles being the seal of divinity, if Jesus Christ were God, He must have worked miracles. And we may ask of Him, like the Jews of old: "What miracles doest Thou that we may believe?"

We need not fear to apply this test, for the public life of our Lord was an uninterrupted succession of miracles.

The divine recital of all His marvellous works constitutes the Gospel; and the most important and the most solemn of all is perhaps the resurrection of Lazarus.

Lazarus was a rich man, much loved by Jesus, and the brother of Martha and Mary Magdalen; he lived at Bethania, which was fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, and often offered hospitality to the Saviour and His apostles.

Now, Lazarus fell seriously sick, and his sisters, seeing that his life was in danger, sent to tell Jesus who was then in Galilee, and said to Him: "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." Jesus answered: "This sickness is not unto death, but that the Son of God may be glorified by it." Notwithstanding the love that our Lord bore to Lazarus and His sisters, He remained in the same place two days; then He said to His disciples: "Let us go into Judea again: Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." His disciples therefore said: "If he sleep, he shall do well;" and Jesus

answered : "Lazarus is dead ; and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there. that you may believe."

When Jesus arrived at Bethania, Lazarus had been dead for four days, and was already laid in the tomb. Martha and Mary were overwhelmed with grief, and were sitting at home and weeping. Their friends and relations were still with them trying to console them ; but Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, rose immediately and went to meet Him, crying : " Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died ! " And Jesus said to her, " Thy brother shall rise again. " " I know, " she answered, " that he shall rise again at the last day. " " I, " said the Christ, " *am the resurrection and the life* : he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live : and everyone that liveth, and believeth in Me, shall not die for ever. Believest thou this ? " " Yea, Lord, " cried the faithful Martha, " I have believed that Thou art CHRIST the Son of the living God who art come into this world. " And she left Him to call her sister. And Mary, rising immediately, came in her turn and fell at the feet of Jesus. " O Lord, " she said to Him also, " if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. " And when Jesus saw her weep, and the Jews who had come with her, He was deeply moved, and His Sacred Heart being touched with divine compassion, He said to them, " Where have you laid him ? " They answered, " Lord, come and see. "

And " JESUS wept " . . .

The Jews therefore said, " Behold, how He loved him ! " but others added murmuring : " Could not He that opened the eyes of the man born blind, have caused that this man should not die ? " Jesus therefore, again groaning in Himself, cometh to the sepulchre ; and it was a cave hewn out of the rock, and a large stone closed up the entrance. Jesus saith, " Take away the stone. " But Martha answered, " Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he has been dead four days. " " Did not I say to thee, " replied the Saviour, " that if thou believe, thou shalt see the glory of God ? "

When the stone was rolled away, Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven, and cried with a loud voice : " Lazarus, come forth. " And he that had been dead came forth, bound feet and hands with winding bands, and his face bound about with a napkin.

And many of the Jews who were present believed in Jesus Christ, and this miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus was spoken of throughout Jerusalem and in all Judea. The enemies of the Saviour were consequently enraged against Him, and they assembled together at Jerusalem at the house of the high-priest, Caiphas, saying : "What shall we do ? This Man doth many miracles, and if we let Him alone, all will believe in Him."

Neither the Jews nor the Pagans of that time ever thought of *denying* the miracles of Jesus Christ ; if they could have done so they certainly would, as that would have been the simplest means of uprooting the Christian faith from the very commencement. But how could they deny facts accomplished in the broad daylight, in the very walls of Jerusalem, or in the largest towns of Judea, in the presence of a multitude of people, and under the very eyes of the enemies of the Saviour ?

Therefore Jesus Christ worked miracles to prove His Divinity to the world.

Like unto those reasonable and faithful Jews who believed in Him during the time of His mortal life, let us prostrate ourselves in deep humility at the Sacred Feet of our adorable Master who became man only for love of us, who thus annihilated Himself and suffered and died only by a miracle of mercy. Let us believe in Him, and lead a pure innocent life, a truly holy life, a truly Christian life ; let us give glory to God, and save our souls for all eternity. But more than all, you who are miserably dead in mortal sin, with souls more terribly corrupt than was the dead body of Lazarus, hear now the Sacred Voice of the world's Redeemer calling to you : "*Come forth !*" Arise quickly whilst there is yet time. Jesus is as powerful to save as when He stood weeping by the grave of Lazarus, and He is calling you even now to a joyful resurrection.

THE BLIND MAN OF JERICHO.

THERE are two species of sight : the sight of the body and the sight of the soul. The second is still more necessary than the first, and the worst form of blindness is not that which is the most pitied. There is no sightlessness so

terrible as that which prevents a man from knowing God, which renders Jesus Christ invisible to the soul, and gives an utter darkness instead of the glorious sunshine of the light of faith. A recent statistic shows that, in France, to every nine hundred men, there is one blind. If God would give us His statistics, He who reads the heart, how terrible in proportion would be the numbers of the spiritually blind!

Jesus Christ has said of Himself. "I am the Light of the world; he that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Jesus is the Light of the soul, just as the sun is the light of the body; the spiritually blind are they who do not know JESUS, who do not believe in JESUS, who do not adore JESUS, who do not follow Him, who do not love Him; these are they who are truly blind, and stumble on through ever deepening shadows. Bodily blindness is surely less sad, since it only closes the eyes to the daylight during the fleeting years of our earthly pilgrimage. Our Lord cured many blind men during the course of His miracles, in order to teach us that He is the Divine Physician and the light of poor blind souls. Let us listen to the touching recital of one of these miraculous cures.

It is related in the tenth chapter of the Gospel of St. Mark that the Son of God, a few days before His Passion, went up from Jericho to Jerusalem. Jericho, the schismatic and infidel town, is a symbol of sin; Jerusalem, the city of God, the city of the Temple, the city of Christ, is a symbol of grace. A great number of people followed Jesus, being drawn by Him from Jericho to Jerusalem, from the death of sin to the life of grace. At the head of this great multitude were the apostles of Jesus, His Priests, by whose sacred ministry He has continued to save the souls of men since He Himself ascended up to heaven.

"And Bartimeus the blind man sat by the wayside begging."

And when he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he began to cry out and to say: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me."

This beggar is a type of all of us who are spiritually blind, and have lost the light of faith, whether from the effects of an irreligious training, or the contagious examples of religious indifference, or from the influence of dangerous

and heretical books. Deprived of this light, shut out from consolation, we stand desolately by the wayside, and no one in the world can change our darkness into light but Jesus Christ the Saviour and Creator of the world. A religious resurrection is taking place amongst us ; it is Jesus who is passing by. Let us call upon Him with our whole hearts, and ask Him to take pity upon us. JESUS, Son of David, JESUS, Son of God, JESUS, our true Saviour, have mercy upon us.

And some of the multitude, weary of the cries of Bartimeus, told him to hold his peace. But the poor man cried the more, "Jesus, have mercy on me!" Many are the evil influences which hold us back from God, many are the false teachers who strive to turn us from Him, and who, with presumptuous doctrines, shallow knowledge, and false conclusions, lead away the ignorant and unlearned. Let us not listen, but acknowledge that we are blind and miserable, that we have no peace or joy in our hearts, that we have nothing to comfort us in all the trials of life ; let us call upon our God ; let us beseech Him to come to our aid, crying, "Lord, save us. Jesus, have mercy on us." Our merciful Lord did not remain insensible to the cries of Bartimeus. He commanded His disciples to bring him to Him. The blind man, full of hope, threw off his mantle and ran to our Lord ; and Jesus having asked him, "What wilt thou that I should do to thee?" he replied, "Rabboni, that I may see." And Jesus said to him, "Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole." And immediately the blind man recovered his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

Let us do the same, and we shall be healed. Let us rise and cast aside our mantle, the unlovely garment of our past iniquities, the unholy garment of coldness and indifference which envelopes us like a winding-sheet. Let us rise and cast ourselves with humble confidence at the feet of those who are the depositaries of the spiritual power of the Saviour, at the feet of the priests who have received from Him the power to pardon sins and to reconcile us to God. Let us go to the Priest and ask him to instruct us in our duties, to teach us to know God, to love Him and to serve Him. Let us confess our faults, and repent of them sincerely ; and after the sweet and powerful absolution has been given us, we shall hear the Divine Voice of

our Redeemer saying to our hearts, "Go in peace; thy faith hath made thee whole."

And following the example of Bartimeus, healed and wholly changed, we shall bless the holy name of our patient and merciful God, and shall prove the sincerity of our gratitude by entering the ranks of His disciples, by becoming true Christian men, pure and devout, without fear and without pride, faithful unto death; and by walking with unfaltering footsteps in the road which leads to Jerusalem, which leads us ever upward to our own true paradise above.

THE MAN BORN BLIND.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, when walking one day through the streets of Jerusalem, met a beggar blind from his birth. His apostles and His disciples asked Him if this poor man had lost his sight as a punishment for his own sins or for the sins of his parents. "Neither," replied the Saviour; he is born blind "that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Having said these words, "He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay upon the sightless eyes of the beggar, and said to him: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloe." In appearance the remedy was worse than the evil: clay or mud in the eyes, and then a bath of common water in one of the public fountains of Jerusalem, was it not a mockery? Was it possible that one born blind should by such means recover the organ of sight? But the thoughts of God are not the thoughts of men, and Divine Providence often employs even that which is evil to produce great good, and uses the most insufficient and, as it seems, contrary means by which to carry out His merciful designs.

The blind man obeyed Jesus Christ; he went in haste to the fountain of Siloe (which signifies in Hebrew, *of the Messiah*), he took water, washed his eyes, and returned seeing. His friends and neighbours, who had known him from his childhood, and had always seen him blind, were struck with astonishment, and asked in bewilderment: "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Some, knowing him perfectly, exclaimed: "This is he;" and others, "No, but it is like him." And the beggar answered both: "I am

he." Then they surrounded him on all sides, and said to him : "How were thy eyes opened?" And he answered : "That Man that is called JESUS made clay and anointed my eyes, and said to me : 'Go to the pool of Siloe and wash.' And I went, I washed, and I see." And it was the Sabbath day, the great day of rest amongst the Jews, and they brought him that had been blind to the Pharisees.* And they questioned him in their turn, asking him how he had recovered his sight, and he replied once more : "Jesus put clay upon my eyes, and I washed, and I see." And a dispute arose among the Pharisees, some saying : "This man is not of God who keepeth not the Sabbath;" and the others : "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" Then they asked the beggar what he himself thought of Him who had cured him, and he answered : "He is a prophet."

The Pharisees, fearing the consequences of the miracle, next endeavoured to raise doubts as to the real sightlessness of the beggar. They called his parents, and said to them : "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then doth he now see?" And they answered : "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now seeth we know not : or who hath opened his eyes we know not : ask himself; he is of age, let him speak for himself." They were afraid to answer more positively, for they knew how bitterly the Pharisees hated Jesus, and they feared to declare that He was the Messiah lest they should be driven out of the synagogue.

Not knowing what more they could do, they called again the man who had been blind : "Give glory to God," they said. "We know that this man is a sinner." "If He be a sinner," replied the beggar, "I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." "What did He to thee?" they repeated with anger and spite : "how did He open thy eyes?" "I have told you already," he answered, "and you have heard; why would you hear it again? Will you also become His disciples?" "Be thou His disciple!" they cried with fury : "we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses : but as to this man, we know not whence He is."

* The Pharisees were a religious sect strictly attached to all the outward observances of the law of Moses; but they were proud, stern men, who set little importance upon the sanctification of the heart

“Herein is a wonderful thing,” replied the beggar, “that you know not from whence He is, and He hath opened my eyes. Now we know that God doth not hear sinners : but if a man be a server of God and doth His will, him He heareth. From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this man were of God He could not do anything.” “Thou art wholly born in sin, and dost thou teach us?” they exclaimed angrily, and they cast him out.

Sometime after our Lord met him, and said to him : “Dost thou believe in the Son of God?” He answered and said : “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?” And Jesus said to him : “Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee.” And the beggar, full of joy, exclaimed : “I believe, Lord ;” and falling down at the feet of the Saviour, he adored Him.

Let us do the same, we to whom Jesus has come to bring the light of eternal truth, the light of the true faith, infinitely more precious than the light of day. Let us obey the commands of Jesus and of His Church, like unto the beggar who found in obedience a perfect cure. Let us go to the fountain of Siloe, to the spiritual fountain of the Messiah, and purify our souls in the sacred bath of penance. Cleansed by the humble acknowledgment of our sins, and by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, we shall feel our faith grow day by day more luminous and untroubled. We shall be able to resist the attacks of the irreligious, the subtle and dangerous influence of the sceptical, and the derision of those who scoff at our holy faith. We shall glory in being the disciples of Jesus, and when saddened by the wickedness and incredulity of men, or by griefs and troubles of our own, we may find an unfailing consolation at the foot of the tabernacle, where Jesus Himself reposes in the Sacrament of His love. There we shall hear our dear Lord, our Divine Teacher, Consoler and Friend, speaking to our hearts the very words which filled the blind man of the Gospel with joy ; and in perfect gratitude, lowly adoration, and, more than all, with fervent love, we shall answer and say to Jesus, “*Credo, Domine*—Lord, I believe.”

THE RISEN JESUS AND MARY MAGDALEN.

MARY MAGDALEN had left everything to follow her Divine Master. She had sold all her possessions, which were considerable, and had distributed her wealth amongst the poor ; a holy and austere life had succeeded the life of sinful pleasure which had been her ruin ; and in the pure companionship of the Blessed Virgin, she had speedily risen to a sublime degree of Christian sanctity. Mary had taken her with her to Calvary, where Magdalen, more courageous than the apostles, intrepid in her fidelity, and unwavering in her faith, had been present during the long hours of agony of Him who had come down to earth to seek and to save the lost. She had helped the Mother of Sorrows to receive the precious burden of the inanimate body of Jesus, after the lance of Longinus had pierced His sacred side ; and lastly, she had been one amongst the train of mourners who had laid within the holy sepulchre the divine Conqueror of death.

After the funeral ceremony, the Jews, who knew well the solemn prediction so often repeated of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, took every means to guard His Sacred Body with jealous care, hoping thus to prove the imposture of the Crucified. The living rock in which the sepulchre was hollowed, had no outlet ; they had closed the entrance by rolling before it an enormous stone upon which they had set the seal of the temple ; and chosen guards, relieved from hour to hour, took away every fear of treachery.

On the third day, the day following the Sabbath, at the rising of the sun, the rock was shaken, and an angel of light came down from heaven, and rolled away the stone. . . . The terrified guards fell back with fear, then speedily took flight. The Holy Sepulchre was open and empty ; the Almighty Lord, Jesus, the Son of God, the Eternal King, the Victorious Redeemer, had risen, and had conquered Death and Hell !

Magdalen, overwhelmed by bitter grief, left her home at the dawn of day, carrying with her precious perfumes, sweet spices, and aromatics to complete the embalming of the Sacred Body of her Master, having as yet only a very vague ideas of what Jesus Christ meant when speaking of His resurrection.

When she reached the Holy Sepulchre she was astonished to find it empty and unguarded. Putting down her perfumes she leant over the opening to the cave into which a few steps, cut out of the rock, led down. The Body of Jesus was there no longer; the fine linen clothes, in which St. Joseph of Arimathea had wrapped Him round, were laid within, and by the side an angel in a shining white robe was sitting. "Woman," said he to Magdalen, "why weepest thou? Why seek you the living with the dead? The Lord is not here, but is risen. Go tell His disciples and Peter." Magdalen, bewildered with grief, did not rightly understand these words; she remained near the tomb still weeping, persuaded that they had taken away the Sacred Body of her Lord and Master.

Jesus, who always comforts those who weep for love of Him, and who always comes to those who invoke Him with a pure and sincere heart, appeared close to the Sepulchre. Magdalen, hearing steps behind her, turned, and exclaimed without reflection: "If thou hast taken Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him: And I will take Him away." She thought it might be the gardener or some one at work there in the early morning. Then Jesus approached her, and said to her "Mary!" At the sound of that adored voice, Magdalen raised her eyes, recognised the Christ, and, falling at His Feet, cried, with rapture and love, "Rabboni" (Master). She desired to kiss His Sacred Feet; but Jesus prevented her. "Do not touch Me," He said, "for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say to them: I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." Now did a Divine light illumine all at once the mind of Mary Magdalen, not only showing her who it was that stood before her, but also clearing away, for the first time, the clouds which up to the present had surrounded the mysteries of His death and resurrection. The love, most pure but yet too human, which had filled her heart, was now united to that supernatural spiritual love which is the love of God. And the flames of this divine charity completed her purification, and rendered her the greatest of female saints, after the most pure and holy Virgin Mary, who is the true Mother of God, the queen of angels and of men, immeasurably exalted above all the creatures who have come forth from the hands of the great Creator.

ZACHEUS.

On Thursday, the 7th of April, in the third year of His preaching, the Saviour, followed by His Apostles, approached the town of Jericho.

In this town lived a rich man of a noble race named Zacheus. Allured by the desire of gain, Zacheus, an Israelite by birth, had entered the service of the Roman Emperor, and had received from Tiberias the important and lucrative post of chief of the publicans. This employment had brought him into great disrepute amongst the Jews; for publicans, being charged to collect the taxes which swelled the coffers of Tiberias Cæsar, were guilty of all manner of frauds and exactions which naturally rendered them odious.

The whole population was moved at the news of the approach of Jesus Christ; a considerable crowd collected to meet Him outside the gates of the town. Urged by curiosity, Zacheus had done like others; but, owing to his low stature, all his efforts to see the Christ who was passing by were useless, until at last he resolved to go on in advance of the multitude, and to climb up into one of the sycamores which grew by the wayside. Jesus, having reached the place, looking up saw him, and said to him: "Zacheus, make haste and come down: for this day I must abide in thy house." Zacheus, struck with astonishment to find himself thus recognised by One who had never seen him, and doubtless moved by Divine grace, hastened to obey. He went forward to his dwelling, and received Jesus with great joy.

In the presence of all, regardless of human respect, and full of humility, faith and repentance, Zacheus prostrated himself at the feet of the Saviour, saying: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold." And Jesus said to him: "This day is salvation come to this house: because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, the good Shepherd of lost sheep, the Divine Consoler of the afflicted and repentant, and in His Sacred Heart those whom the world hates and despises may ever find a certain refuge. He loves sinners, and by this merciful and compassionate

love He changes their hearts, drives away sin, and, by planting in its stead His Divine Grace, restores to them peace and holiness.

We are all like unto Zacheus, since we are all sinners, immeasurably attached to the things of this world and careless about eternity. Jesus and His Church are ever passing through our midst; all are present, but few are touched; these few are Christians, true Christians, the little flock of faithful disciples, of sincere penitents, who correspond to the grace of Jesus and receive Him with joy into their house, or rather into their hearts, by frequent communion.

Zacheus was low of stature; in order to see Jesus he was obliged to climb up into a sycamore. And we too cannot go alone to God without using those means which He has placed in His goodness on our pathway to supply what is wanting to our weakness. We must have recourse to the ministry of the pastors of the Church; we must listen to their teaching, and be docile to their voice: it is to them that we must confess our sins in deep humility; we must follow their religious guidance, and receive from their consecrated hands the Divine Communion, the Sacred Bread of eternal life.

Like Zacheus we must rejoice in being Christians, and the service of our God must be our happiness and glory. We must fearlessly observe not only the commandments of God and of the Church, but the counsels of evangelical perfection; we must love God and the poor, and strive to merit from our just and merciful Creator the benediction which Zacheus received: "This day is salvation come to thee. . . . This day I must abide in thy house!"

THE REPENTANCE OF MAGDALEN.

MARY, surnamed Magdalen (from the name of some property she possessed in the town of Magdala, upon the borders of the Sea of Galilee), was the youngest sister of Lazarus and Martha, who are ever to be honoured and remembered for the holy friendship which bound them to our Lord. Lazarus and Martha had always faithfully obeyed the laws of God; but their young sister had yielded to temptation, and fallen miserably into sin.

One day, in the midst of a life of depravity, she heard speak of Jesus, of His miracles, of His goodness, of His perfect holiness, of His mercy to sinners. Attracted by curiosity, and by an undefinable feeling of repentance, the poor sinner drew near to the Saviour, listened to His stern, sweet words, and received from Him a benediction which prepared the way for her conversion. Sometime after, our Lord arrived at Capharnaum, near to Magdala, and remained there for many days, preaching to the people those sacred and divine truths which are summed up in the Gospel under the name of the Sermon on the Mount. The Blessed Virgin, St. Martha, and the other holy women who followed Jesus and provided for His necessities, brought Mary Magdalen a second time to the source of life. The first words of Jesus had made her tremble and yet filled her with hope, and these humbled her to the dust. But she dared not cast herself yet at His feet, but, returning to her house, she dismissed all the sinful and worldly companions by whom she had been surrounded, took a vase of costly perfume, and with tears fast falling, and insensible to human respect, she set forth in haste to the house of a certain Pharisee of Capharnaum, named Simon, who had invited our Divine Lord to supper in his sumptuous home.

When Magdalen entered the banquet hall, she found Jesus surrounded by Pharisees who were watching all His actions, and marking all His words, perfidiously seeking some grounds upon which to accuse Him at the great council of the Jews at Jerusalem. Magdalen seemed to see and hear nothing but her Saviour. She cast herself at His feet, kissed them with love, bathed them with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. Jesus said nothing and did not even appear to notice her. Simon and his friends looked on in ironical astonishment. "This man, if He were a prophet," they said within themselves, "would know surely who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him, that she is a sinner." And then, at last, Jesus broke the silence. "Simon," said He, gravely and sweetly, turning to His host, "Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee." "Master, say it," replied the Pharisee. "A certain creditor had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, the other fifty. And whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both

Which, therefore, of the two loveth him most?" "I suppose," answered Simon, "that he to whom he forgave most." "Thou hast judged rightly," replied the Saviour, and turning to the poor sinful woman He asked, "Dost thou see this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet; but she with her tears hath washed My feet, and with her hair hath wiped them. Thou gavest Me no kiss; but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she with ointment hath anointed My feet. Wherefore I say to thee, Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much." "What does He say?" murmured the disconcerted Pharisees; "He blasphemeth. None can forgive sins but God alone." But Jesus, without paying any regard to these murmurs, looked on Magdalen with Divine compassion: "Thy sins are forgiven thee," He said, "thy faith hath made thee safe; go in peace!"

And Magdalen the sin-defiled, Magdalen the woman who had been shunned, despised, condemned, and whose life had been a scandal and a by-word, a contamination and a reproach, rose from the feet of her Redeemer crowned with the grace of God, and possessing, in her deep repentance and in the love of Jesus Christ, a treasure no less precious than the innocence she had lost.

Blessed are the sinful who go in confidence to the feet of Jesus, and weep there for the sins which have separated them from Him! Blessed are those sincere and humble penitents who kneel down at the feet of the Priest, the representative of Jesus, the depositary of the Divine power to pardon sins, by whom He still continues His sacerdotal ministry on earth! Blessed are they who hear those words of Divine forgiveness which are uttered even now over heads bowed down in true repentance: *I absolve thee from thy sins, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost!*

"I have never been so happy in my life!" exclaimed a young man who had at last confessed the sins which had long weighed heavily upon his conscience.

There is no happiness, no light-heartedness, that can be compared to the peace that follows sin forgiven. Will you not test the truth of this assertion, you who read these lines, and are perhaps living far from God?

THE WIDOW'S MITE.

DURING the three years of His public teaching, our Lord frequently entered into the Temple. One day He was with His Apostles in one of the halls leading into the Sanctuary, and called the Treasury, because the alms of those who went in to prayer were received in a kind of box placed there for that purpose. Here our Lord paused for a few minutes, watching those who passed through, and noticing the alms which they cast in.

Many rich men cast their gifts generously into the treasury. A poor widow came and gave two small pieces of money equal to one farthing. When she was gone into the Temple, the Son of God turned to His disciples and said: "Verily I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than they all. For all these have of their abundance cast into the offerings of God: but she of her want hath cast in all the living that she had."

Are not these Divine words very consoling for those who gain their bread by the work of their hands, who possess nothing but what is necessary, and yet desire to help those who are more unfortunate than themselves? The widow's mite is an evident proof that all men, the poor as well as the rich, are called by our Father in heaven to fulfil the great and holy law of almsgiving. The rich, in order to accomplish the will of God, should give much and should give gladly; the poor should give a little, and, as they know by experience all the hardships of poverty, it is scarcely necessary to add that the little they give should be given ungrudgingly.

The poor widow in the Gospel, when casting in her two mites, did not surely give much, yet God Himself declares to us that her alms were of greater value than the abundant offerings of the rich who had preceded her. God does not weigh the actions of men by the same measure as we do. In all our actions He seeks, and specially desires, purity of intention, love, charity, and self-abnegation. The outward action, although it has its own importance, is nevertheless only secondary, and thus the law of Christian equality amongst men ever subsists in the sight of God notwithstanding the diversity of rank, fortune, and social position.

We live in an age when, thanks be to God, fraternal charity seems to be increasing every day. Under the direction of the Bishops and Priests, the true friends of the poor, and the divinely-appointed consolors of all human misery, charitable Catholic institutions are rising on all sides. In town as well as country, associations of men or women devote themselves to visiting the poor and the sick; they shelter the destitute, the orphans, the aged and the fallen; they give bread to those who have none, and thus fulfil the great law of Christianity. It would be exceedingly ungrateful not to recognise this, and to give ear to the false accusations and libellous assertions made by those contentious spirits who desire to rouse the poor against the rich, and who are themselves at war with religion and with all the laws of society. With very rare exceptions the rich give constantly and give generously; but it is not necessary, I repeat, to be rich in order to be charitable. The honest workman who, seeing his comrade out of work, shares with him the bread that he gains by the sweat of his brow, gives alms, and gives them nobly too. This is *the widow's mite*, and when the rich man enters the same miserable home to minister abundantly to the same distress, his alms shall have less value in the sight of God than the morsel of bread given by the workman. Those who go much amongst the poor, witness every day this most touching charity, so small in the eyes of men, so great in the sight of God, which they exercise one towards another. They see poor, hard-working women, with little children of their own and scarcely enough to feed them, give a home and a shelter to the poor little orphans whom some dying neighbour entrusted to their care. They see poor workmen open the doors of their humble dwelling to old men paralysed or blind, who would die of hunger without this assistance, and who thus find care and affection during the last years of their life. This is *the widow's mite*; this is the charity our Lord declares to be the greatest.

Dear children of God who will read, perhaps, these lines, if it has been the will of your Father in heaven to cast your lot amongst the poor He loves and cares for, act thus unto your brethren, and you shall be rich in God's most holy sight. rich for all eternity.

THE FATHER OF A FAMILY.

THE Gospel forcibly represents God to our minds under the figure of the father of a family. And, indeed, a lesson too often unheeded is hidden beneath this name. It belongs to God, not only because He is the FATHER, the Principle, the Creator of all things, but because the manner in which we are governed by His Providence is entirely justified by the conduct of a good father of a family here below. Every one knows what constitutes this character: a constant vigilance over his children, an untiring care for their welfare, true affection united to perfect justice, patience with their faults, and, more than all, a generous earnest love. Every one admires a man who brings up his children upon such a principle as this, and no one would be so unreasonable as to blame him when he sees necessity to mingle severity with tenderness, punishments with rewards.

But if it is thus, how can we ever be so unjust as to murmur against God, when He acts with regard to us just as we ourselves act with regard to our children? Why do we do in respect to God, the Father of all men, exactly that which we condemn in our own children, who, less wise than their father, and ignorant of his reasons, misjudge their parents, murmur against them, and sometimes even doubt their tenderness? Let us consider a little how an earthly father acts if he is good and wise, and we shall clearly see that God, against whom during the course of our life we often dare to murmur, acts towards us exactly in the manner that we esteem so highly in an earthly father.

First of all, the father gives life to his children, who think little of this fundamental benefit, the basis of their existence and of all their happiness. This is the first resemblance, for we are nothing but children grown, and we forget each day that God is our Creator, that life is a benefit which He has bestowed upon us in pure mercy and goodness, and we never thank Him that He has sent us into the world.

Our love for our children is always greater and more disinterested than is their love for us. A child is generally egotistical, and receives from its parents more affection than it gives them in return. This is the second resemblance, for what would become of us, alas! if our

Father in heaven did not love us more than we love Him? We receive everything from Him, and give Him very little in return.

And the father does not only give life to his children, but by his work he provides them with all that they need to nourish and strengthen that life which is dearer to him than his own. He submits to hard work, he labours and toils, and sometimes when weary and tempted to turn aside from the daily task, he remembers his children, and the thought inspires him with renewed energy. The child receives and eats with indifference the bread so hardly earned. GOD, our Creator, has not only sent us into the world that we may attain that eternal happiness which alone is worthy of His almighty power and love; but He has deigned to come down to earth to labour for this end, by taking our weakness upon Him, by suffering for our sins, and meriting for us this everlasting reward; and, ungrateful that we are, we receive as if it were a little thing the ineffable gifts of the love of Jesus Christ; too often even we reject them, like unto the child who wastes and despises the bread that his father has laboriously gained.

A good father loves all his children with an equal tenderness, and notwithstanding this, or, rather, because of this, he does not treat them all the same. He varies, according to their characters, his severity or indulgence. He passes over nothing in the child who would only abuse his forbearance, and does not rebuke so severely the child whose character requires a gentler discipline. Moreover, he measures to the appetite and constitution of each the quantity and quality of the food he gives them; in a word, he treats them differently, and at the same time with perfect wisdom, and justice, and love. But instead of recognising this enlightened affection, the children, jealous of each other, complain, rebel, and accuse their father of showing an unjust preference. Do we see no reflection here of our conduct with regard to God, who gives to each of us what He knows to be necessary and useful? His wisdom is as infinite as His goodness, and even as the heavens are higher than the earth, so is the Divine Fatherhood of our great Creator above the common fatherhood of men.

Our children often disobey us, do wrong and oblige us to punish them. Parental authority is irksome to them, even though it is their safeguard. When they transgress

our commands, and we cause them to suffer for their disobedience, the child, beating against the bars of wholesome discipline, regards firmness as tyranny, and its parents as persecutors. Do we not act in the same way when we murmur against the justice of God, when we resist His holy law, and refuse to understand the punishments due to our sins? Lastly, when the erring child repents and throws itself weeping into its father's arms, does he not pardon it, whatever its fault may be? does not the repentance of a child always efface the guilty past? And God also pardons everything to repentance when He sees it comes from the heart; but when the sinner is incorrigible, God acts like the father of a family, who disinherits and curses his unnatural child, after having exhausted every means of mercy, entreaty, and forbearance; He curses him eternally, disinherits him from celestial happiness, and counts him no longer amongst His children.

This striking resemblance might be carried still further. If we reflected a little sometimes on that standard of right which God Himself has given us as the guide of our own conduct, we should understand more clearly His dealings with ourselves; we should see that in this, as in all things, God has created us in His own image, and learn humbly to accept this justification of that Divine Providence of which our best and highest instincts are only a pale reflection.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

SUCH is the title of one of the most touching parables of our Lord.

A parable is an allegorical story which embodies for those who hear it some moral lesson. Our Lord Jesus Christ was accustomed by this means to instruct the people who gathered round Him.

The parable of the Prodigal Son is one of the most beautiful in the Gospel, and one which is most fraught with the lessons that we need.

Sinners, won by the mercy and compassion of Jesus Christ, often approached to listen to Him, and the Gospel tells us how the Pharisees murmured against Him, saying: "This Man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." Jesus, who knew their thoughts, spoke to them this parable:

“A certain man had two sons :

“And the younger of them said to his father : Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his substance.

“And not many days after, the younger son, gathering all together, went abroad into a far country, and there wasted his substance living riotously.

“And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want.

“And he went and cleaved to one of the citizens of that country ; and he sent him into his farm to feed swine.

“And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat : and no man gave unto him.

“And returning to himself, he said : How many hired servants in my father’s house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger.

“I will arise, and will go to my father, and say to him : Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee : I am not now worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants.

“And rising up he came to his father. And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running to him fell upon his neck and kissed him.

“And the son said to him : Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee ; I am not now worthy to be called thy son.

“And the father said to his servants : Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him ; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet :

“And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it ; and let us eat and make merry :

“Because this my son was dead, and is come to life again : was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

“Even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance.”

How hard of heart those Jews and those proud Pharisees must have been to resist such words as these. But we who have hearts in our breasts will respond with gladness to this sweet invitation of our merciful Saviour. For this man, this father is Himself, by whom we have received eternal life in the waters of holy Baptism. Our Divine

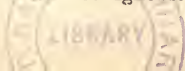
Father has two distinct classes of children : those who ever remain faithful to Him, and those who abandon Him to follow the bent of their own evil passions. To which of these two classes do we belong? to the faithful, or to the multitude of prodigals?

Alas! once in our past life there came a day (perhaps whilst we were still young like the son in the Gospel), there came, I say, a most disastrous day when we left our Father's home. With all the gifts of God, with mind and heart, with senses and imagination, and with all our worldly possessions, we abandoned God our Father. He allowed us to go from Him, for He retains no one forcibly by His side. This liberty, with which He has endowed us, and which is destined in His merciful designs to enable us to merit the glory of Paradise, we may by sinning use against Him, like the prodigal son, who abandoned his father by means of the inheritance he placed in his hands. . . .

And he went into a far country, the poor prodigal! far from his father into a strange land. Sin does, in truth, lead far from God. The soul dwells no longer in an abode of peace, innocence, and virtue; and what is it that she seeks and finds in this dark region? Impurity instead of holy purity, and in the place of humility, vanity, and a restless desire for notoriety; instead of the love of God, the love of evil, and the guilty pleasures of sin; in a word, in the place of life, there is death; in the place of all that is good, there are all things evil; in the place of God, there is the Devil, the lord and master of sinful men!

But in this life, shut out from God, the prodigal finds no happiness. He spends all his substance, and poverty and wretchedness come upon him. There is a mighty famine in the land which he inhabits, the famine of the soul, the hunger of the heart; for that heart which is made for God alone can only find repose when it is united to Him by faith, and hope, and love.

And the prodigal does not only suffer from want, but from humiliation and degradation; from the liberty of the children of God, he passes into the servitude of the Devil. He becomes the slave of one of the lords of that miserable region, that is to say, of some dominant sin which holds him in its most ignoble yoke; sometimes it



is drunkenness, sometimes it is sloth, sometimes it is anger, most often it is the shameful vice we even shrink to name.

And, in the vile slavery of the passions, the child of a rich and noble father passes his days with swine, passes his days, that is, in loathsome sins and degraded companionships.

But now from the very depths of his misery and abjection he lifts his eyes to heaven. He remembers his father, his goodness, his tenderness. . . . His heart is softened; hope springs up in his soul, and with it comes repentance. . . . The guilty man returns to himself, and becomes conscious of his shame. It is enough! he cries. I can no longer lead such a life. How many, less favoured by God than I, are in His service, happy and contented with their lot, whilst I am wasting the precious moments of my life! I will arise and go unto my Father. I will retrace my steps; I will become once more pure and upright, virtuous and devout. I will not shrink from the humiliation of a sincere acknowledgment of my sins, I will confess them humbly as I did in better, happier lays.

This good resolution once made, the repentant prodigal does not delay the fulfilment of it, however difficult, until some distant and uncertain time. He rises immediately and leaves the swine, that is to say, he shakes off the shameful habits of his vicious career, abandons and execrates the service of the cruel master who held him in bondage, and reaches his father's home. . . . There he finds no merciless judge, but a true father, in the priest who welcomes and receives him.

"I have sinned," says the repentant sinner, "I confess to God, and to His Saints, and to you, Father! I am not worthy of pardon, but my hope is in the goodness of God." How quickly come the words of forgiveness: I absolve thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Go in peace, my child, and sin no more! behold the white robe of thy innocence, the peace and glory thou hadst lost. Thou art become once more the child of God, the heir to an eternal crown. . . . Come, therefore, O purified soul, approach the sacred banquet prepared by our Heavenly Father for His faithful children, in which He gives them, for the food and nourishment of

their souls, Jesus, His own Divine Son, in the Sacrament of His love !

And the poor sinner, taught by bitter experience, and treasuring his new-found happiness the more since he has lost it for so long, vainly strives to give expression to his gratitude.

Is this your history, reader? If you have, like the prodigal, wandered from the happy home of your childhood, hasten, I entreat you, even as he hastened, to return. Your Father is waiting for you; He is weeping for the child whom He has lost. . . . God grant that soon there may be joy in heaven over your return.

THE FIELD AND THE GOOD SEED.

A MAN had a field, and, when the time was come, he went out to sow his seed. You have seen labourers sowing seed in the country, and you know how they scatter it along the furrows. The master of this field, sowing the seed in this manner, let some of it fall on the road by the side of his field, and the little birds carried it away quickly, for the road was hard and beaten, so that it could not sink into the earth.

And some fell upon a stony place, and as there was not enough soil or moisture the seed as soon as it sprung up withered and died.

And some was cast into a corner of the field where briars and weeds covered the ground; the wheat sprung up and even attained a certain growth, but little by little the parasitical plants surrounded it, the stem withered, and it was soon completely choked.

And lastly, the remainder of the seed—and this, thanks be to God, was by far the greater part—fell into the fertile ground; and, when the time of the harvest was come, the master of the field saw with joy that it was covered with golden corn, and that the ripened ears contained some thirty grains, some sixty, and some even a hundred. Then he sent his reapers with their sickles, and filled his spacious granaries with the produce of the harvest.

Do you know who is this *Man*, this Sower who ploughs His field in the sweat of His brow, who sows it Himself, and cultivates it with such care? Do you know what is

this field, this ploughed and cultivated land, the possession of its owner? And, lastly, do you know what is this seed cast into the field when the time for the sowing is come?

This *Man* is Jesus Christ our Lord, perfect God and perfect Man, the Sovereign Master of the world, who came forth from the bosom of the Father by the adorable mystery of the Incarnation. This field which belongs to Him is the whole world, and in particular the human race, the great family of His reasonable creatures. The seed is Truth, it is the Christian Faith which He comes to plant as a fruitful germ in the depths of our hearts, prepared to receive the gift of God, and, in a manner, *ploughed* by the workings of Divine Grace.

Our Lord and Saviour gives us all the seed of life, He casts the good grain all around; but all do not receive it alike, all do not correspond to the designs of His infinite goodness. Some, wholly given up to sin, have hardened their hearts; they hear the truth, but they do not receive it with love and reverence, and the devil has no trouble to render it wholly useless. These are represented by the beaten road where the seed cannot enter, and where the birds carry it away when it is not crushed beneath the feet.

Others, represented by the rocky ground, have certain good desires, but their hearts, similar to ground of which the soil is dry and only sprinkled here and there, are not capable of deep impressions. The truth strikes them perhaps for an instant, but it finds neither means of growth nor sufficient preparation; and the germ of life quickly decays and dies.

Others, still better disposed, receive the Word of God into hearts that are well prepared. It germinates and acquires, year after year, a growth which is full of promise; but, alas! the passions gain strength, and, like to the briars and thorns, gradually overpower the good inclinations implanted by God. To triumph over evil, to rise above the thorns, courage is needed, diligence in prayer, an earnest spirit, capable of sacrifice: instead of this, men give themselves to pleasure, they begin by a reckless and misguided use of that which is permitted, and end by grasping madly at that which is forbidden; they lose the spirit of faith, and soon the briars cover all the ground, the dew of heaven can no longer penetrate to the stem of the plant, neither

can the vivifying rays of the sun, and therefore the ears cannot form, and the stem itself dies for want of moisture. Lastly, and this, I trust, applies to you, my reader, there is the good ground, where there are neither weeds nor stones, and which receives into its furrows the grains of wheat which the Divine Sower plants there. Developing beneath the influence of God's grace, the generous grain reaches its full maturity; the soul corresponding to the love of our Lord Jesus Christ puts in practice His precepts and His counsels, and marks out by works of Christian holiness every step of life. Amongst these faithful Christians some, represented by the ears of thirty grains, fulfil their duties faithfully yet without aiming at perfection; and others, typified by the ears of sixty and a hundred grains, give themselves to God with a more perfect generosity, advance incessantly in the love of Jesus Christ, and thus constitute the best and noblest portion of His holy Church.

The time of the harvest is for each of us the instant in which we enter upon eternity, and the rich granaries of the Lord of the harvest are the many mansions of our heavenly home where we confidently hope to be admitted, not by our own merits, but by the great mercy of God, and through the infinite merits of Jesus our Lord. The reapers are the holy angels who will present our souls to God when they shall leave this world, and who will be with us in the dwelling of our Heavenly Father. O happy harvest! sweet and blessed hope! may we all strive to lead the life which shall bring to us this glorious fruition!

THE PARABLE OF THE SAMARITAN.

ONE day when our Lord was teaching the people who surrounded Him, He spoke to them this parable, related by St. Luke in the tenth chapter of his Gospel.

“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way; and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan, being on his journey, came near him; and seeing him, was moved with compassion: And going

up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him; and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee."

Then Jesus asked: "Which of these three men in thy opinion was neighbour to him that fell among robbers? He that showed mercy to him, replied the Jew whom our Lord addressed. And Jesus answered: Go, and do thou in like manner."

This touching parable teaches us, in the first place, that charity must be active, generous, and devoted. This good Samaritan listens only to the promptings of his heart; he does not calculate; he gives not only his money, but his time, his own personal exertion and his sympathy; he devotes himself wholly to the cause he has at heart.

It gives us also an illustration of the old proverb, "'Tis not the coat that makes the monk," and we see that men who are specially called by their holy ministry to exercise charity to their neighbour should not allow themselves to be surpassed by others in those labours of love for which they are peculiarly fitted. The priest is lifted by his sacerdotal consecration above the level of other men, and his virtues, more especially the virtues of mercy and kindness, should be proportioned to the excellence of his sacred vocation. Thank God, our Christian priests little resemble that Jewish priest and that hard-hearted Levite, for upon them rests principally, if not entirely, the sweet and heavenly task of comforting the miserable, of consoling the sorrowful, of receiving the unfortunate. The priest alone has received from Jesus as a special trust the divine prescription, as it were, for the balm of the Samaritan: he applies it to the wounds of poor humanity, whose sufferings he calms, and to whom he restores and preserves life. The faithful who follow his example and practise for the love of God the great lesson of charity which their pastors are incessantly teaching, imitate also in their turn the Samaritan of the Gospel.

This parable is typical, moreover, of a greater mystery which it would take too long to develop fully here. It shows us Christianity as contrasted with Pharisaism and the ancient law, and teaches us how infinitely more sweet

and powerful is the grace of the Gospel than the austerity of the Jewish observance. The Samaritan, a stranger to this law, is the new world, the Pagan world which, regenerated by the Apostles and the Church, was soon to become Christian, and receive with love One whom they found wounded, bleeding, unknown, despised by the Jewish priesthood and by God's ancient people. For He whom all men pass upon the way is no other than the CHRIST, the Saviour, the Son of God who, in His infinite love, has made Himself, like us, a traveller on the earth, who has taken a body and a soul like unto ours in the womb of the Immaculate Virgin Mary; who has taken upon Himself the expiation of our sins, and for this cause has abandoned Himself to the strokes of Divine justice, to the sacrilegious fury of devils, and of the impious Jews. Jesus recognises for His brethren and faithful disciples only those who come to Him, only those who bring consolation to His Sacred Heart by the fidelity of their love. And since He is now ascended to the right hand of His Father in the invisible glory of the heavens, it is in the persons of our brethren, and particularly of the poor, that we must henceforth prove our charity to Him. "As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me." Let us therefore love each other with a sincere, effective, and compassionate love; let us not limit our charity to material alms, but let us rather give to our alms their true value by our personal sympathy, our willing assistance, and our kindly compassionate words. Blessed is he who shows mercy in such a spirit as this; our Lord will render to him a hundredfold when He shall come again at the last great day.

LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN.

THERE are still to be seen at Jerusalem the ruins of a splendid house, which tradition relates to have been that of the rich man of the Gospel. For some believe that this celebrated parable was not a simple allegory made use of by our Lord for the teaching of a truth, but the real history of men who had existed.

However that may be, let us carefully consider the divine words, and derive from them instruction.

"*There was a certain rich man,*" said our Lord one day to His disciples, and the Jews gathered round Him. It is indeed no sin to be rich, and often it is a great grace from God. What good may not be done with riches? And how many of the poor and unfortunate have reason to thank Heaven for having bestowed fortunes upon those who have charitable hearts, and are ever ready to assist them. At the same time we must reflect upon these words of our Saviour, since He never uttered useless words. Therefore: "*There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen.*" Here we have a most serious fact, and one which indicates the first danger of riches. It is no evil to be rich, but it is a danger to those who have not the true Christian spirit, and a compassionate heart; and it is easier for a rich man to become proud and egotistical, than it is for a poor man.

"*The rich man feasted sumptuously every day.*" This is the second danger of riches when not counterbalanced by piety: sensuality, voluptuousness, and love of pleasure. Indeed, experience proves that it is infinitely less difficult to resign one's self to privations, than to restrain one's self in the midst of enjoyment.

Such was the life of this rich man, entirely filled with feasting, amusement, and all those pleasures which the world regards as perfectly innocent. According to human judgment, he was a happy man. It also appears that he led what is socially considered a blameless life, for we do not read in the Gospel of any wrong that he had done.

"*And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and no one did give him.*" The rich man did not refuse him; he simply forgot the beggar. . . .

And dogs more pitiful than the man of pleasure seemed to furnish the lesson he needed, for gathering round poor Lazarus they licked his wounds. And thus these two lives passed: for one worldly pleasures and the indifference born of prosperity and ease; for the other suffering, poverty, patience, and resignation.

"*And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.*"

That is to say, to paradise, to the eternal dwelling of the just, to the true home of the children of God. He had appa-

rently done nothing extraordinary to merit so great a reward, but the judgments of God are happily very different to the judgments of men, and poor Lazarus had done much by suffering with patience, and by humbling himself meekly beneath the hand of God.

“And the rich man also died : and, added the CHRIST, he was buried in hell !” What unexpected words ! And why so terrible a punishment ? Is it, then, a crime to be rich ? . . . No, but a danger, and one which this man had failed to escape. Instead of being the father of the poor, and going about doing good after the example of our Divine Lord, he had been wholly occupied with himself, he had lived a life of selfish ease, and had floated down the current which is ever rushing onwards to the fathomless ocean of unutterable despair.

“And lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom : and he cried and said : Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue ; for I am tormented in this flame.

“And Abraham said to him : Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things : but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.”

And here the poor who love God may find consolation, and the rich who do not love Him may see just cause for fear. We do not simply say the poor and the rich, but the poor who love God, and the rich who love Him not. It is a matter of indifference to God whether we are poor or rich, but our Heavenly Father is by no means indifferent to the disposition of heart with which we support the trial of poverty, or the still greater trial, perhaps, of riches. It is better to be poor and holy, than rich and holy, because poverty renders us more like to Jesus Christ, the model of all the elect ; but it is infinitely better to be rich and holy than poor and sinful ; and our Lord Himself declares in the Gospel that it is not riches, but the abuse of riches, which excludes us from the kingdom of God.

Dear children of God who are poor, even as our Blessed Lord was poor, seek consolation in the certain hope of happiness to come ! Suffer with patience and with Christian fortitude the sorrows of this present life, and, like unto the poor and holy Lazarus, do not murmur but bear your cross with love !

ST. PETER DELIVERED BY THE ANGEL.

ST. PETER, being elected by Jesus Christ to be the chief of the apostles and the head of the Church, commenced to preach the Divine law upon Mount Sion on the day of Pentecost. The apostles and disciples, priests and deacons, preached with him under his direction. The Jews of Jerusalem and of the cities and villages round, having been witnesses of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and of the wonderful miracles of those whom He had sent, were converted in great numbers, and asked to be baptized, so that a considerable society of Christians was very speedily formed. Herod, the enemy of Christ, was alarmed at the rapid propagation of the Christian faith, and, desiring to please the unbelieving Jews, he set on foot a violent persecution. St. James the Greater, brother of St. John, had the happiness to suffer martyrdom upon this occasion; and thus the Church of Jerusalem was the first to gain, by the martyrdom of her first bishop, the crown of the glorious victory which is sealed by the blood of the saints.

But Herod, in order to disperse the little flock, desired to reach higher still, and struck the Sovereign Pastor. He seized St. Peter, and put him in prison, intending after the Easter Festival to have him put to death in the presence of all the people. Therefore four bands of soldiers guarded the holy captive day and night. And the whole Church prayed without ceasing for her Pontiff and her Father.

On the very night preceding the day fixed for his suffering, Peter slept in his prison bound by a double chain, and with a soldier at each side. And other guards were watching before the prison door.

And suddenly an Angel of God stood by him, under a human form, but surrounded by heavenly radiance, and the prison was filled with light. The Angel touched Peter and awoke him. "Arise quickly," he said, and immediately the chains fell from his hands. And the Angel said to him, "Gird thyself, and put on thy sandals, and follow me." Peter obeyed, and going out from the prison he followed the Angel, hardly conscious whether it were all a dream or a reality.

They passed the first and second body of guards, and came to the iron gate which leads to the city, which of

itself opened to them. And soon after the Angel disappeared. And coming to himself, Peter cried : " Now I know in very deed that the Lord hath sent His Angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews."

And he turned his steps towards the house of Mary, the mother of St. Mark, who was the faithful companion of St. Peter in all his evangelical labours, and who wrote at Rome, under his dictation, one of the four Gospels, and was afterwards sent by him to Egypt, where he died the first bishop and martyr of Alexandria. Having reached this house where many Christians were assembled in prayer, the holy apostle knocked at the door ; a young servant named Rhoda came to listen, and recognising the voice of Peter, she ran back again to the disciples and told them that Peter was at the gate. She had forgotten in her joy to open it. They answered her : " Thou art mad. But she affirmed that it was so. Then said they : It is his angel."

And in the meantime Peter continued to knock. Then they went all together to open the gate, and when they saw him they were overcome with astonishment. And Peter told them all that had passed, and then he left Jerusalem before the dawn of day. In the morning the surprise and disturbance of the soldiers was extreme when they found their prisoner was no longer there. Herod, having sent to seek him, came himself in great anger ; he examined the soldiers and commanded that they should be put to death. He died himself soon after being struck by the Angel of the Lord for his crimes, " and being eaten up by worms, he gave up the ghost."

And the Church increased and multiplied day after day, continuing fervent and unanimous in prayer, in daily communion, in the practice of all good works, and in the most perfect obedience to St. Peter and all the Apostles of our Lord.

MIRACULOUS CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

HEROD AGRIPPA, the king of the Jews, and the high-priest also, watched carefully for every opportunity of persecuting the apostles, and those who believed on their

word. They found only too faithful a servant and ally in a young man of Tarsus named Saul, the same who had taken charge of the garments of those who stoned the deacon Stephen. And to him they gave full liberty to persecute the disciples of Jesus Christ. We learn from himself, that at Jerusalem he went from house to house of all those who were suspected of Christianity, and dragging away those men and women who confessed the faith, committed them to prison, and framed decrees against them, which he hastened to put into execution.

One day when he was wholly occupied with his projects against the disciples of Jesus Christ crucified, he learned that at Damascus a large number of Israelites had forsaken the law of Moses to follow Jesus Christ. He went immediately to the high-priest, and asked him for letters to Damascus and to the synagogues, so that he should possess liberty to seize the Christians and bring them bound to Jerusalem. His proposition was accepted, and he set out for Damascus accompanied by others in an official position who were under his orders. As a tiger thirsting for blood rushes upon a sheepfold, even so did Saul now press forward on his errand breathing only carnage. when suddenly he was stopped in the midst of his journey.

“At mid-day,” he said himself, when relating his conversion to King Agrippa, “suddenly from heaven there shone round about me a great light: and falling on the ground, I heard a voice saying to me: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And I answered: Who art Thou, Lord? And He said to me: I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And I said: What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said to me: Arise and go to Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things that thou must do. And whereas I did not see for the brightness of that light, being led by the hand by my companions, I came to Damascus. . . .

“Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias, and the Lord said to him in a vision: Ananias. And he said: Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the street that is called Strait, and seek in the house of Judas one named Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth. But Ananias answered: Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil

he hath done to Thy saints in Jerusalem : and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that invoke Thy name. And the Lord said to him : Go thy way : for this man is to Me a vessel of election, to carry My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house ; and laying his hands upon him, he said : Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, He that appeared to thee in the way as thou camest, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight ; and rising up he was baptized."

The conversion of St. Paul, of which the historical accuracy is incontestable, proves the divinity of Christianity by two of the most striking miracles that it is possible to conceive. We see first the outward miracle, as we have just related it, and secondly the inward miracle. For St. Paul went forth from Jerusalem breathing fury against the Christians, and desiring nothing but their death, and suddenly we behold that his every thought has changed, and that his very nature appears altered. He becomes a Christian, and one of the most intrepid apostles of Jesus Christ. Such a change constitutes a miracle no less wonderful than the first ; for, if it is contrary to the moral constitution of man to pass suddenly and without any motive from an implacable hatred to an ardent love, it is still more extraordinary when the most powerful motives still exist to inflame the fury of a persecutor. And without doubt most powerful were the motives which all combined to deter Saul from such a change. First : The love of his nation and his religion, for he loved the Jews, and was deeply attached to Judaism. Second : His own personal interest ; his worldly prospects, which were brilliant in the extreme. All depended upon his remaining a Jew. He had gained the protection of the princes and magistrates of his nation by his zeal against the Christians ; whilst by his conversion to Christianity he had nothing to hope from the apostles, who were detested, despised, poor, ignorant, timid, whose Master had died ignominiously, and whose whole undertaking seemed now on the point of being entirely overthrown by the princes and magistrates leagued against them. Far from having anything to hope for, he knew well that he was devoting himself to ignominy,

to torments, to persecutions, even to death, since that was the lot of the early Christians ; he would have even more to fear than others, because the Jews would regard him as a traitor who had betrayed them by asking for letters which would enable him to persecute the Christians of Damascus. Therefore it is clearly evident, from all these considerations, that the fact of the conversion of St. Paul, notwithstanding all the powerful motives which he had to persevere in Judaism, includes two striking miracles which prove the divinity of Christianity.

Thus Jesus Christ, by His almighty power, made of St. Paul that vessel of election whose ardent zeal to proclaim the Christian faith soon spread throughout the nations of the earth. He is justly called the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

SIXTH PART.

PIERRE THE APPRENTICE.

. . . ONE Sunday in the February of 1858, a poor boy of about fifteen or sixteen years old came to my house at Paris, and asked to see me. He was exceedingly pale and delicate looking, and was very meanly dressed. His large blue eyes were full of candour, and his gentle, subdued manner pleaded in his favour. He told me that his name was Pierre Sazy, and that he was an orphan apprenticed to a gilder, and had come to me to seek refuge and protection. I made him sit down, and he told me his story.

His father had been a workman, and a very indifferent Catholic, and his mother, who had died when he was a little child, was a Protestant. Owing to the care of Sister G——, one of the good sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, who knew his family, the two children, Pierre and Auguste, had been brought up in the Catholic religion, and the poor mother, before she died, had embraced the true faith. When Pierre was thirteen, and Auguste six or seven years old, they lost their father. They were received by one of their aunts, who left no means untried to induce the children to become Protestants.

Pierre resolutely resisted, and although he was deprived of all communication with any Catholic priests, and forbidden to go to Mass on Sunday, to confession or communion, the poor little fellow preserved intact the treasure of his holy faith. It was in vain that his aunt took him to three Protestant pastors in succession; the child held firm, and remained faithful.

At last his aunt grew angry, and on the 4th of January she told him, as a kind of New-Year's greeting perhaps, that he must either become a Protestant or leave her house

at once. The poor apprentice had no other home. His employers gave him board and lodging all the week, but on Sundays they went into the country, the house was shut up, and the apprentice was obliged to go where he could. Pierre, being now forced to renounce his faith or to remain without food or shelter for twenty-four hours, did not hesitate an instant. For six Sundays in succession he went without anything to eat, and passed the nights in wandering through the deserted streets of the capital.

On one of these Sundays, at ten o'clock in the evening, overcome by hunger, cold, and weariness, he went and knocked at his aunt's door. When she recognised his voice she asked him, without opening it, if he still persisted in remaining a Catholic. Upon his reply in the affirmative, and in spite of his supplications, she angrily dismissed him. It was snowing fast, and the poor boy passed the whole night out of doors. But so severe a trial could not last much longer; the child's health gave way, and a wearing constant cough began to exhaust his strength.

On the following Sunday he remembered Sister G——, who had been the kind protectress of his family. He made inquiries as to where she was living, and after much trouble found her at last, and when he saw her he threw himself into her arms, exclaiming, "Sister, have pity on me, I give myself up to you!" The good sister having given him plenty to eat, and congratulated him on his constancy, sent him to me with her recommendation, and thus Pierre presented himself before me, and, relying upon the message that he brought for the warmth of his reception, entreated me to be a father to him. God knows how willingly I consented. But as the soul is of far higher value than the body, I commenced by recalling to this dear child the principal points of the faith for which he had suffered so much, then I heard his confession, and gave him those supreme consolations which have their only source in the Adorable Heart of Jesus. When he rose from his knees, my poor little Pierre, quite overcome and his eyes full of tears, clung to me, embracing me with affection: "What a happy thing it was for me," he exclaimed, "that they turned me out of doors!"

And so every Sunday after that he came back to me; every one received him as if he had a right to be there;

he had his own little room and his supper ready for him ; and on Monday morning he went off contentedly to his work.

One Sunday, in the early days of April, Pierre appeared to us to be paler than usual, tired and suffering. A low fever came on, and he could not go back to his master. A few days after, one of my friends, a clever physician, having come to see me, I asked him to examine my poor apprentice, who appeared quite exhausted. "The boy is dying," said the doctor after having seen him ; "he is in consumption, and a part of his right lung is already gone."

What was to be done ? I could not keep the child with me, as I could not make proper arrangements for having him nursed well. It was a difficult thing to send him to the hospital, as there they are unwilling to admit patients who appear to be only suffering from weakness.

I immediately applied to the good Brothers of St. John of God, and the charity of these admirable Religious was even beyond my hopes. They immediately received my little sick boy for the love of God, gave him a clean, comfortable room, and from that day (April 15) surrounded him with such constant care, such affectionate and thoughtful attention, that poor Pierre, quite amazed at such devotion, could not speak of it without tears.

He was nursed and cared for night and day. "I am treated like a little prince," he said to me. "These good Brothers give me everything I want ; they are true saints, and I thank God for sending me to them."

And the good Brothers loved Pierre as if he were their child. They told me when I came to see him how the poor little fellow, whose sufferings were extreme, constantly edified them by his patience and his fervour. He received communion at first every week. "I am making up for lost time," he said. Then, when I saw this pure and innocent soul truly hungering for the Divine Eucharist, I allowed him to communicate twice and then three times a week, and at last just "when his heart told him." And the grace of God so completely filled the heart of the child He had called to be His, that without any need of confession he went to communion every day. "He receives our Lord like a little angel," said the Brother who had the care of the infirmary. Pierre found in communion all his happiness and all his strength. "When I have received

communion I suffer less," he said, "and I cannot be impatient any more. If I ever get well I will consecrate myself to God, and will be a priest, or a Brother of St. John of God.

In the meantime the disease seemed to be making no progress, and the time had passed which the physicians had named as the probable extent of his life. Pierre in spite of his sufferings was always cheerful and sweet-tempered.

One day a barber of the neighbourhood, who was regularly employed at the house, and who happened to be upon this occasion decidedly more merry than he ought to have been, entered Pierre's room and proposed to shave him. Pierre gravely seated himself. Then the barber perceived that the young face had not even the shadow of a beard. "But you have no beard!" he exclaimed, regarding the sick boy with stupid astonishment. "I know that very well," replied Pierre. "Then what are you waiting for?" "I am waiting till it grows," said the good little fellow, smiling.

This unfailing sweetness of temper, united as it was to such true piety, gained all hearts, and great was the number of charitable friends who came to visit him. The good sister went to see him often, and she would tell me a thousand little details which showed his grateful, affectionate nature. "You cannot imagine," she would say, "how thankful he is for all that is done for him. Whenever he hears you spoken of his eyes fill with tears, and your visits comfort him more than all the remedies."

But the moment was fast approaching when Pierre should enter into the rest and the peace of Him whom he loved with such pure and childlike tenderness. On the 17th of July he asked if the Holy Communion might be brought to him very early the next morning. The night was full of suffering, his poor little body was wasted to a skeleton, and every movement of the bed-clothes gave him pain.

At a quarter past four, a brother came to prepare the altar for the Holy Eucharist which the chaplain was soon going to bring. He knelt down by the child's bed. "My dear Brother," said Pierre, "shall we pray together?" "Yes, my dear child, what prayer shall we say?" Pierre named the Litany for a happy death, a beautiful prayer

filled with consoling thoughts, which he knew almost by heart from having repeated it so often. Scarcely was the Litany finished than he called to the Brother with a sharp cry, and he, being alarmed at the sudden change which had passed over the child's face, went in haste to seek the Brother who was accustomed to nurse him. This good Religious hastened immediately to his side, held the cross to the lips of the dying child, had just time to suggest to him some acts of love, of contrition, of confidence in JESUS and MARY, and at about half-past five in the morning he received poor Pierre's last sigh. Only a little later the humble pious child was to have received communion upon earth; JESUS had called him to a more excellent communion still, to one of which the fruit can never be lost, to the communion of a blissful eternity.

Lying there upon his death-bed, my little Pierre looked like a sleeping angel. A new strange beauty and a heavenly sweetness rested on the calm, young face. They buried him with the scapular and medal of the Blessed Virgin, in whose protection he had had perfect confidence, and with a large crucifix which I had given him, and which he had worn round his neck night and day, and had kissed frequently, saying: "My Jesus, I love Thee."

The next day, the 19th of July, many of those who had known and loved him accompanied his coffin first to the church, then to the cemetery of Montparnasse; very poor and simple was that coffin in the eyes of men, but very rich, I doubt not, in the sight of God and of His Angels. . . . Upon his grave I had a white cross placed with this simple inscription: *Here rests in the peace of God, and in the eternal love of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, Pierre Sazy, His faithful servant, who lived sixteen years, and died on the eighteenth of July, eighteen hundred and fifty-eight, in the confession of the Catholic Faith.*

CONVERSION AND DEATH OF A YOUNG PROTESTANT.

A poor sempstress of Paris, Mademoiselle P——, who was wholly devoted to God, and to good works, heard one day in the month of November 1850, that a young Swiss artist, a Protestant, dying of consumption, had been

reduced by poverty to enter the hospital to be nursed through his last illness.

The thought of the lonely, friendless condition of this young man, who had lost both his fortune and his health, and, still more, a desire to save his soul, inspired Mademoiselle P—— with the idea—a singular one perhaps, but, at all events, most Christian—of going to the hospital to see M. Gabriel Ædmann, and of trying to impart to him, if possible, the only true consolation.

According to the Christian rule, Mademoiselle P—— commenced by prayer. She cast herself at the feet of the Mother of God, and promised her to spend for the poor sick man all that she could gain up to the time of his conversion; she asked many to join her in prayers for this intention, she had a Mass said for the success of her good work, and then, under the protection of Mary, she entered the hospital of Beaujon.

Gabriel Ædmann was thirty years old. He was dying of consumption. Death was already written upon his wasted face.

He received Mademoiselle P—— at first with astonishment, then with pleasure. To those who are suffering any kindly friendly face does good. His visitor spoke to him of his illness, of his circumstances, of anything that would be likely to interest him. She asked if she might come and see him again. "Yes, indeed, gladly," exclaimed the poor sick man, quite touched, "no visit has ever given me so much pleasure." And when Mademoiselle P—— left him, his eyes followed her with gratitude.

The following Sunday she came again. Gabriel Ædmann could not understand such kindness. "But you do not know me," he repeated, "why should you take any trouble about me?" and the pious sempstress tried to explain to him the difference there is between the love with which Christians love one another and the so-called friendships which exist between men and women of the world.

Everything went smoothly so long as she confined herself to general topics, but when she began to speak to him of the Blessed Virgin, when she asked him if he would not be glad to think that others were asking her prayers for him, he grew angry, and replied with animation "that he was not a Catholic, and should be sorry to put confidence in a woman who could do nothing for him; in

God perhaps ; but in the Virgin, never !” The poor girl replied, quite simply, that Catholics love the Blessed Virgin because she is the Mother of God ; that they call upon her in their troubles because the Saviour, when dying, gave her to His disciples to be their Mother and Protectress ; and that all are sure of her assistance who invoke her with faith and confidence. “ And do you think that she could cure me ?” asked Edmann. “ See what a long time every one has tried in vain !” “ Indeed she could cure you,” replied the pious sempstress ; “ that is to say, she can *obtain* for you the cure of your body, and, what is better still, patience and resignation. But for this it is necessary to pray to her, and to believe that she is truly the Mother of God.”

Gabriel Edmann, unusually moved, remained silent for an instant. “ And you, do you believe this ?” he asked suddenly. “ I do most firmly believe it.” “ Then I will believe it too. Pray for me, and ask your friends to pray for me, as you said ; though I cannot imagine why they should pray for a stranger.” Then Mademoiselle P—— told him that the young girls who belonged to the associations of the Blessed Virgin met every Sunday and prayed together, and how they prayed especially for the afflicted, for the sick, and for sinners. Gabriel seemed surprised and touched at all he heard. “ But you also, for your part,” added Mademoiselle P——, “ must pray yourself to Mary. Stay, here is a beautiful prayer composed in her honour by a saint.” (It was the “ Memorare.”) “ Will you promise me to read it ?” “ Yes,” replied Gabriel. “ And here is a little medal with her image ; let me tie it round your neck.”

The sick man consented, and from that moment a great change came over him. “ If she can cure me,” he said, “ I will pray to her every day.” And there were tears in his eyes as he spoke. “ And now,” he added, “ you are no longer a stranger to me, let me think of you as my sister.”

Before leaving him, Mademoiselle P—— asked him if he would receive a visit from a priest whom she knew, and to whose prayers she had recommended him. “ Willingly,” he said, “ provided that he does not talk to me about religion.”

Happy at her success, full of faith and of confidence in the Blessed Virgin, Mademoiselle P—— came to me with this good news. I went at once to the dying man. We soon made acquaintance with each other ; my first visit was

short, but we parted friends. I did not speak of religion, and Gabriel requested me to come again. In a very little time I did so, and I read my welcome in the suffering dying face of the poor artist. I sat down by his pillow; he held my hand in his and regarded me with affection. I spoke to him of God, and of the consolations He gives to those who love Him. I soon perceived that poor Gabriel had not even the semblance of a creed. He scarcely believed in God or in His Divine Providence, not at all in the Blessed Trinity, nor in Jesus Christ, nor in Christianity. I briefly explained to him all that the Catholic Church teaches concerning these great truths, and he seemed surprised at finding it all so clear, so reasonable, so worthy of God and man. As I spoke to him his eyes were fixed upon me, and an undefinable expression animated his pale sunken features. I felt, I could see the action of God's grace rushing in upon this soul; life was being breathed into it, the light of Jesus Christ was enlightening it, the Holy Spirit was dilating and softening his heart; and presently I began speaking to him of the sweet Virgin Mother, and of the excess of the mercy of our Heavenly Father, who, not content with having given us His Son for our Saviour, went further still, and was willing in His great compassion to envelop the Divine Sun of Justice and of Holiness in a soft luminous cloud, lest His bright eyes and piercing rays, which even the mystery of the Incarnation could not dim, should overpower and dazzle our feeble, human sight.

"Everything you say is new to me," said poor Gabriel; "but I feel irresistibly convinced of its truth. I have never had such teaching, and light seems breaking in upon my mind with every word you utter. Such faith I feel must come from God; it is a revelation; and I believe that in mercy He has sent you to me, who had no faith, that I should not die in darkness. For this I thank Him, and now I will hear you, father, to the end, and you shall be to me as a messenger from heaven."

And next I spoke to him of the Sovereign Pontiff of the Catholic Church, and explained to him how the Pope is the successor of St. Peter, the Supreme Head of the disciples of Jesus Christ; and that we are all bound to listen to him and obey him, because it is by Jesus Christ that he is sent; and I repeated the grand words of the

Gospel: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and to thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

"Are those the exact words of the Gospel," he questioned, "and truly spoken by Jesus Christ?" I found the passage and gave it to him to read, and I could see by the expression of his face as he read that he was perfectly content, and that every shadow of doubt was passing swiftly away. I should have wished to give him time to think over all I had said, and to realise the happiness which arises from a conviction of the truth; but the hours were precious, the Sister had warned me that he might not live through the night, therefore I decided.

"My child," I said to the dying man, "you are a Catholic at heart already, why should you not be so altogether? You should wait no longer, but should at once enter into the true Church of Jesus Christ." Gabriel Edmann did not answer, but steadfastly regarded me. "Will you become a Catholic?" I repeated. A violent conflict seemed to be going on in his mind. "Yes," he said at last in a whisper; "but what will my mother say if she should hear?" "What could she say? When we recognise an error, is it not loyal, is it not necessary, to renounce it at once and to embrace the truth? Do you firmly believe that there is one God in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost?" "Yes, I believe it." "Do you believe that the Son was made man to save you; that He died for you upon the Cross; and that He has prepared for you a blessed eternity?" "Yes, I believe it, I believe it with my whole heart." "Do you believe that there is only one Church which is divinely appointed to teach the Christian faith, and will you become her child?" "I will." Then I took some holy water which I had brought in case I should need it, and baptized him conditionally under the name of *Gabriel, André, Marie*.

It was the 30th of November, the Feast of St. Andrew, Apostle, and his own feast. We were both struck by this coincidence. "What happiness!" he repeated. "What happiness, it is truly the day of my feast!" And as he spoke his face grew radiant. I then received his confession, and gave him absolution conditionally also, as is done in such cases. And when I had ended he embraced me with inexpressible tenderness and emotion. "Father, father,"

he murmured, "I believe all ! how good God is ! He has forgiven me everything. He loves me, and I love Him. I have never been so happy in my life !" Then, lifting his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed : "I see now why all this trouble came upon me, and why I was obliged to take refuge in this hospital. It was because I refused to believe in Jesus Christ. God struck me in order to heal me. But now I am a Christian. All is ended." He asked me to allow him to make his first Communion, but I put it off until the next day, for fear of tiring him too much ; and, full of gratitude to the Mother of mercy, I left this newborn son of my heart, whom I was never, alas ! to see again in this world.

Mademoiselle P—— went to him the next day. I was prevented going. As soon as he perceived her he held out his hands, and exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, "Thank God, I am a Catholic !" The poor girl was so much moved at seeing him thus that she burst into tears. The dying man spoke to her of God with an emotion and a depth of feeling that were quite wonderful in one who had been so cold and indifferent. "I was baptized," he said ; "I made my confession, and was absolved from my sins on the day of my feast. It was the Feast of St. Andrew. My dear little sister, I am a Catholic, I am the happiest man in the world."

It was arranged that the next day I should see him, and that he should make his first Communion.

"There is no time for delay," he added ; "for I am going to die. I recommend myself to your charity. I should like to rest when I am dead in the midst of my brethren in consecrated Catholic ground." Mademoiselle P—— promised him that this should be as he desired. She left him full of faith, of gratitude, of love to Jesus Christ, of devotion towards the Mother of God.

When she returned the next morning at nine o'clock he was dead. I met her coming back. We thanked God together for the salvation of this soul, worked by our united efforts ; and on the following day I offered for the expiation of his sins the sacrifice of propitiation, of which I placed the fruits in the hands of Mary.

Mademoiselle P—— brought her work to its final completion. By her own wish she paid the expenses of the burial of Gabriel Edmann out of her modest earnings, and accompanied him herself to his last resting-place.

THE REGENERATION OF A PARISH.

SEVEN or eight years ago the venerable Bishop of a diocese, sadly remarkable for religious indifference and neglect of the Sacraments, summoned a young priest—pious, humble, and devout—in order to confide to him a strange mission. “I have,” he said, “at the extremity of my diocese a population of more than eight hundred souls, who have no religion and no church within their reach. It is necessary that these should be saved, evangelised ; and I have thought of you. A parish must be created there, and I have appointed you the *curé* ; only I can give you no money, and there is neither church, nor presbytery, nor school, nor stipend. Have you the courage to undertake this mission ?” The good priest knelt down : “Command me, Monseigneur,” he said. “I am the child of obedience—*In verbo tuo laxabo rete.*” And he departed with the blessing of his Bishop, or rather of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, hidden in His bishops as in a kind of sacrament, continues through them His divine ministry of the Good Shepherd, even until the end of the world. I have the honour and the happiness to know this priest, and it is from himself that I have received some of the details I am about to relate.

He commenced by consecrating the whole of his little patrimony to enable him to commence building a church. This patrimony amounted to little more than three hundred pounds. His father and mother gave it up to him with the understanding that, as they were both very old, he should make a home for them and provide for their necessities. Another old lady, a widow, who had previously helped in paying the expenses of the ecclesiastical education of the new *curé*, did the same as his father and mother, and took shelter with them beneath the more than modest roof of her adopted son, giving up to him also the whole of her little fortune, which amounted to about five hundred pounds. And thus the walls of the church began to rise, in a manner built and cemented with charity and self-sacrifice, rather than with mortar and stones. The altar and pulpit were of plain wood, covered with coloured paper ; the walls were bare : but at last the *curé* was able

to assemble his people there, to speak to them of God, to celebrate the Mass, and to teach the Catechism. The admirable devotion of the good priest made others desire to emulate his example. Three or four good women, ashamed at the miserable condition of the only chasuble in the parish, gave, for want of something better, their scarlet and blue umbrellas, and by joining the pieces together made a chasuble more novel than new.

Relying wholly upon Divine Providence, the good *curé* engaged two sisters to teach the poor children of his parish, hired (without money) a large shed or outhouse where they might be instructed; and soon sixty little boys and seventy little girls came every day to learn, first of all, religion, which is the greatest science in the world, then that secondary knowledge which even the most humble require for the daily needs of life—reading, writing, arithmetic, &c. The two sisters, now become sisters of the poor *curé*, were provided for by him and lodged in a kind of dormitory with his mother and his old benefactress.

The expenditure of the kitchen was not very considerable; all denied themselves cheerfully and generously for the love of God. For more than a year this little community only consumed a kilo of meat a week. The butchers of the place, fortunately for themselves, had other customers.

The *curé* had also constructed a kind of presbytery. During the first winter the little household did their best to keep from freezing; there were no panes in the casements, nor even frames in the windows. In the night they hung an old straw mat over the opening, and in the daytime they walked about and breathed upon their fingers.

But if the holy priest were poor as regards temporal wants, he had become very rich in spiritual possessions; in four or five years he had gained for God the souls of almost all his rustic parishioners. Upon his arrival he had found fourteen practical Christians out of more than eight hundred inhabitants; now he could count only twenty who had not fulfilled their Easter duties. And they not only fulfilled the obligation—the stringent obligation—which the Church imposes, but a lively, earnest piety had completely metamorphosed a great number amongst them; so much so that at the principal feasts,

many hundreds approached the Sacraments. Every Sunday fifty or sixty of the congregation came together to the church, half an hour before the High Mass, at the sound of the bell, and received Communion; every day there was a comparatively numerous attendance at Mass, and ten or twelve devout Catholics, the best and holiest in the new parish, and the joy of their good *curé*, had adopted the sacred custom of communicating every day. The children especially filled him with hope; after their first Communion, he impressed upon them as much as possible the necessity and happiness of frequent Communion; almost all received our Divine Lord into their hearts every week or every fortnight, and the least fervent every month. "I have," said the happy *curé* to me, "little boys and little girls of thirteen and fourteen years old, who, whilst minding their flocks and working in the fields, never lose sight of the Presence of God all through the day. These poor little ones have a great love for the Blessed Sacrament, and not being able to do more, for want of time and opportunity, they receive Communion every Sunday."

Besides poverty, which is so rich and so fruitful a treasure; besides the holy example of austerity, penance, and devotion which he had given to his parishioners, it was by the Holy Communion that this excellent priest had worked such a marvellous change. Kind and merciful to sinners, confiding in the goodness of the Saviour, and in the powerful efficacy of the Holy Eucharist, he gave Jesus to souls, leaving it to Him to work a divine work within them, and to strengthen their good will. For such confidence many reproached him; he was accused of imprudence and innovation; but facts, which speak more clearly than words, answered for him and silenced his detractors. Two or three times he was even publicly accused to the See, and was sent for to justify his conduct; and each time his Bishop sent him back with renewed benedictions and warm encouragement. This opposition formed his principal cross, more painful than all his privations, and he told me that he offered them to God to obtain the conversion of the most hardened sinners.

He made two or three journeys to Paris, and obtained, from several rich and pious families, vestments and the help he needed to supply his church with all that was necessary: a beautiful altar of stone, a handsome pulpit,

sacred vessels in silver-gilt, chasubles, copes, &c., the Stations of the Cross, a bell, and, lastly, a parochial library, which furnished him with the works of St. Francis de Sales, and other good and useful books, to distribute in every family for the winter evenings. And to-day, the greatly loved and honoured father of this great spiritual family, which he made his own at the price of so many sacrifices, he rests in constant work, still bringing souls to Jesus Christ year after year, and counting as nothing those trials which are changed by the love of the sweet and merciful Saviour into perfect joy and abundant consolation.

May our Lord raise up amongst us many priests with the Apostolic spirit; may He make their labours and exertions fruitful, and by their ministry restore to life the spiritually dead, awake the sleeping, give warmth to the tepid, strengthen the weak and slothful, and, what is better and higher still, perfect the good and raise up saints.

EXECUTION OF THE CARABINEER GUTH.

ON the 3d of February 1850 a soldier, the carabineer Jean Guth, aged thirty years, was condemned to death, and shot for the murder of his captain. I was then chaplain to the military prisons of Paris.

I saw poor Guth for the first time at the prison of the council of war when he was only accused. He received me with joy. "I had," he said, "one moment of madness and desperation. This came to me as a judgment from God, whom I had abandoned. Now I have only Him, henceforth He is everything to me; I have nothing left but Him." I told him that I would return the next day to reconcile him to God. He thanked me earnestly. "How much good you do me!" he exclaimed, "I do indeed need your help." On Sunday the 26th of January, the day before his condemnation, he received Communion, and so deep was the impression made upon him that he was quite overcome with emotion. He believed that I should not come till late in the day, and was perfectly ready to fast until five in the evening, so lively was his faith.

At his trial he was considered impassive; he was only peaceful and resigned; he even intended to declare at the

tribunal that he recognised the justice of his sentence, but he had not courage, as he had great difficulty in speaking French, being Alsatian, almost German, by birth. "It is better as it is," he said to me when giving me an account of the trial; "I should, perhaps, have said too much. It is sufficient that God knows everything. Why should I think of men? I have nothing left but God." Then he added: "If I had always prayed as now, I should not have done that. My father used to say to me. 'Fear God always; pray to Him. He is our only Good; everything else is nothing.' But in the regiment it is so difficult. You are surrounded by young men who only speak of evil." He refused to appeal to another council. "My sentence is just," he said to me many times; "it would be to go against God. I do not desire to be pardoned; it is a *necessary* punishment. I must expiate my sin. Only I would not be shot at once, but have time for repentance." When the keeper of the prison asked him if he desired to sue for a repeal, he said: "Why should I? that is not my hope."

On Friday the 31st he was transferred to the *Prison de l'Abbaye* to await the result of a petition for pardon which I had addressed, in his name, to the President of the Republic.

He was always calm and peaceful. On Sunday morning, the 2d of February, I brought him the Holy Communion for the second time. I did not know that his end was so near. He was full of recollection. He wept in communicating. It was in the evening, at a quarter-past six, that the commander, Monsieur Dupont, announced to him the fatal news. I was with him at the time. He heard it with resignation. He then repeated that his sentence was just, and that he utterly repented his sin. I remained alone with the poor condemned man. "I quite expected it," he said, "but not so soon—in a few days. Ah, well! that does not make much difference; and, strange to say, I am quite calm. I have no weight upon my mind."

I remained with him for two hours. I pointed out to him some passages in the "*Imitation*" of JESUS CHRIST, and I saw his whole face light up at some of the words I read. He spoke very little, but I felt that the purest and most elevated expressions of faith and love to God found an echo in his heart.

When I told him that I should come with him as far as Versailles, he exclaimed, "Oh, you are giving yourself too much trouble about me!"

I left him at about half-past ten, and when I exhorted him to pray constantly, he answered: "Yes, I must make much of the time that is left to me. I must not think of being tired. I shall have time to rest with God."

In the morning at about half-past three I took him the Holy Viaticum. At four o'clock the prison van was at the door. He thanked the keeper for the kindness he had shown him. There were tears in many eyes. "Farewell, Guth," said the keeper; "die like a brave soldier and a good Christian!"

During the three hours and a half that the journey lasted his calmness never forsook him. God was with him in that hour. "Our Lord is with us, my child," I said to him; "and if we have Jesus, we have everything!" "Yes, yes," he answered, "I am quite content." And a moment afterwards: "I hardly like to say so, but I feel as if I were going to a wedding; God has permitted it all for my good to save my soul. It is a great consolation to me that my poor captain died a Christian death. I shall soon see him again; he is praying for me." He recited the Rosary, his eyes fixed upon the Crucifix with love. "My God has saved me," he said; "I believe that He will be very merciful to me. He went up to Calvary carrying His Cross. I am with him; and, like Him, I will gladly submit to everything if they desire to bind me or bandage my eyes."

"Soldiers are lost," he said again, "because they will not listen to you. Without you, without religion, the whole world would be lost." We passed close to the barracks where he had committed his crime. He said a prayer for the captain. "I cannot conceive what possessed me," he exclaimed: "I did not desire his death." And a minute after: "*If by a single sin I could escape being shot, I would not commit it!* That is what I feel. I have nothing left on earth. I am going home to God."

At half-past seven we stopped in the plain of Satory, near Versailles. It was the field of the military manœuvres. We descended. Guth was pale but composed. An officer read his sentence.

"I recognise the justice of my punishment," said the

condemned ; “ I repent of my crime ; I ask pardon from God, and I love Him with my whole heart.”

Then he knelt down. For the last time I gave him the Crucifix to kiss. “ Father,” he repeated in a changed voice, “ into Thy hands I commend my spirit. . . . I unite my death to that of Jesus, my Saviour ! Farewell ! Farewell ! ”

I embraced him. He extended his arms in the form of a cross and bent his head.

An instant later human justice was satisfied, and the soul of the poor criminal, purified and transfigured by religion, entered into the bosom of HIM who pardons *everything* to the repentant sinner !

TEL EST PRIS QUI CROYAIT PRENDRE.

Two young officers, when walking one day in Paris, entered the church of the Assumption. After having looked at the pictures, the architecture ; after having thought of everything excepting God, they were going out, when they perceived a priest wearing a surplice kneeling down close to a confessional. He seemed to be waiting for some one.

“ Look ! do you see that *curé* ? ” said one of the young men, laughingly, to his companion. “ What is he doing there ? ”

“ Waiting for you, perhaps,” replied the other.

“ Not very probable,” answered the first ; “ but what will you bet that I go up and speak to him ? ”

“ I bet you will not.”

“ And what is more, that I will confess to him ? ”

“ I bet you will not.”

“ I bet that I will. Come, what do you bet ? ”

“ A good dinner.”

“ With champagne ? ”

“ With champagne.”

“ Done ! . . . Agreed ! . . . Wait for me, and watch the manœuvre.”

And the foolish young fellow advances boldly to the priest of God. He whispers to him and he rises immediately, enters the confessional, then the officer goes in at one of the sides and kneels down, just as is always done.

“ Will he ever have the effrontery ? ” thought the other.

And with a smile of admiration on his lips, he sat down to wait for the improvised penitent.

This went on for about seven or eight minutes, at the end of which he thought the joke had lasted a little too long. At length, after more than a quarter of an hour, the officer rose, came out of the confessional, and left the church after making a sign to his friend. His face was serious, and he seemed deeply moved. However, he laughed about the adventure with his companion, but would not tell him why he had remained so long. Upon the first excuse he left him and returned home. Two days after he again entered the Assumption, and, after having prayed for a long time, approached the same confessional where the same priest had just gone in.

This time he remained for half an hour; there were tears in his eyes when he came out. . . . Peace and joy were written in his face. . . . He had just received the pardon of his sins. . . . And what was the meaning of this, and what had happened to him two days before? It happened as follows, and I tell it in the officer's own words.

The priest to whom he addressed himself very quickly perceived, by the tone of his penitent, that he was listening to no serious confession.

"This is all in mockery, Monsieur," he said gently, interrupting him. "You are doing wrong; you must not scoff at the things of God nor at His appointed ministers. But I pardon you from my heart, and I pray God to do the same."

The officer, a little disconcerted, tried to excuse himself.

"No, no," said the good priest, smiling. "You have done wrong; let us say no more about it. Still, since you have sought me out, allow me to speak to you for a minute, to ask you what you are—what is your calling?"

"Willingly, father," replied the young man; "I am an officer."

"Ah! that is a very fine calling. And what is your grade?"

"I am a sub-lieutenant; I come from Saint-Cyr."

"And after that what will you become?"

"I shall be a lieutenant."

"And afterwards?"

"Afterwards a captain."

"And afterwards?"

"A commander; then lieutenant-colonel, then colonel, then general, then lieutenant-general, perhaps."

"And what age will you be then?"

"Well, if I have good luck, and if I go to Africa, about forty or forty-five."

"And do you not intend to marry?"

"Oh, yes, I shall marry."

"Well, then, you will be a general and married; and after that what will you become?"

"After that? why there is nothing left but the grade of a marshal."

"And supposing that you should obtain that, what would you do afterwards?"

"Upon my word, I should do nothing more. I should rest with my wife and my children."

"And afterwards?"

"How afterwards?"

The serious tone of the priest troubled the young officer.

"Ah, well! I shall die *afterwards*."

"And afterwards?"

The young man shuddered. Of *this afterwards* he never thought.

"You give me no answer, Monsieur," said the confessor gravely. "You are ignorant, perhaps, of what will come to pass *afterwards*. You have told me only of what will happen *before*. But, now I will tell you, in my turn, what will happen *afterwards*. After your death, your soul will appear before Jesus Christ, and will be judged, not according to that human glory which will have vanished like a dream, but according to the good or evil it has done. If you have been virtuous, a faithful observer of the laws of God and of His Church; if you have been humble, pure, chaste, just and merciful to others; in a word, if you have been a good and faithful Christian, you will be saved and will enter into the immutable happiness of eternity. If, on the contrary, you have followed the bent of your evil passions; if you have forgotten the services of God; if you have been proud, sensual, negligent, merciless, and unjust; in a word, if you have not been a true Christian, you will be damned, under-

stand me, Monsieur. General, marshal, though you may be, you will be judged by *Him* who has no respect of persons, and you will hear the thunder of the terrible sentence : Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'

"Now I have only one word more to say to you.

"It was no slight offence to come thus to mock me, face to face. I demand some satisfaction which, as a man of honour, you cannot refuse.

"I *demand*, understand me ; I *demand* that during one week, every night before you sleep, you shall think of what I have just said to you, and shall pronounce these words : *I shall die ; but I laugh at it. After my death I shall be judged ; but I laugh at it. After my judgment I shall be eternally damned ; but I laugh at it.*

"This is the reparation that I exact. Will you give me your word of honour that you will not fail to grant it?"

His penitent, wholly entangled in the snare he had intended for another, dared not refuse. He promised upon his word of honour to do what was asked from him.

"Go then, Monsieur," said the priest ; "I pardon you from my heart, and I promise to remember you before the throne of God."

From a sentiment of loyalty and honour, the young officer performed the penance thus imposed. He made no resistance, and two days after his heart changed, and, sincerely repentant, he returned in good earnest to that confessional which he had only entered in jest. He has since become an excellent Christian.

If we were wise, we should reflect every day upon the shortness of life, and the unchangeable eternity which awaits us ; and by such means we, too, should become good and faithful Christians.

GENERAL CAMBRONNE.

THE celebrated Cambronne, one of the bravest generals of the First Empire, commenced his military career by the lowest grades.

He was a corporal in 1795, and was quartered at Nantes. Notwithstanding his youth (he was scarcely twenty), he had already contracted that deplorable habit which is the ruin of so many soldiers, the habit of drinking, and even of getting thoroughly intoxicated. And as the young man was high-spirited and hot-tempered, it was scarcely safe to cross or to vex him when his natural excitability was increased by copious libations of wine.

One day, when intoxicated, he forgot himself so entirely as to strike an officer who gave him an order. He was tried by court-martial and condemned to death, as is customary in such cases.

Nevertheless, the colonel of his regiment had learned to appreciate the energy, courage, and intelligence of the young soldier. He applied to a representative of the people, a commissary of the Government, then at Nantes, and asked pardon for Cambronne.

"It is impossible," replied the commissary. "It is necessary to make an example, or discipline will be lost in the army. Corporal Cambronne must die."

But still the colonel persisted, and pleaded his cause so well that he obtained the pardon of his soldier, but on one condition only, and that was that *he would never get intoxicated again.*

The worthy colonel went at once to the military prison and sent for Cambronne.

"You have committed a serious offence, corporal," he said to him.

"That is true, colonel; but you see the consequences. It has cost me my life."

"Perhaps," said the colonel.

"How so, perhaps? You know the rigour of military law. I expect no pardon. I have nothing but death before me."

"No; you must not die yet. I bring you the pardon of which you despaired. I have procured it with much trouble from the commissary of the Government. He remits your punishment, and even restores you to your former grade, but on one condition."

"A condition! Speak, colonel, speak; I will do anything to save my life, and still more to save my honour!"

"It is on the condition that you never get drunk any more."

“O Colonel, that is impossible!”

“What, impossible! and to escape death! You are going to be shot to-morrow; think of that!”

“Do you see, colonel, that in order to keep this condition I should be forced to give up drinking wine altogether; for Cambronne and the bottle are such good friends that they never know how to part. It is impossible to stop! So you see I cannot promise never to get drunk again.”

“But, wretched man, can you not promise to drink no more wine?”

“None at all?”

“Certainly.”

“Ah! that is a serious thing to propose, no wine at all. None at all. And, colonel, if I gave this promise, what warrant would you have that I should keep it?”

“Your word of honour. I want nothing else. I know you well, and I am convinced that if you give it you will keep it.”

And as the condemned man remained silent, he added: “Well, Cambronne, what have you decided?”

“You are too good to me, colonel,” replied Cambronne in a moved and serious tone. “I thank you for your confidence; I appreciate it even more than the pardon that you bring me. . . . God hears us.” Then, lifting his hand: “I, Cambronne, swear to you that one drop of wine shall never touch my lips again during the whole of my life. . . . Are you satisfied, colonel?”

“Yes, my friend,” he replied, pleased and touched by what he had just heard. “Yes, I am satisfied with you. To-morrow you will be free. Be a brave soldier, and employ in the service of your country the life she gives you back to-day.”

The next day Corporal Cambronne returned to his regiment and resumed his former duties.

Twenty-five years after *Corporal* Cambronne had become *General* Cambronne; he had commanded the Imperial Guard at Waterloo, and had displayed remarkable courage in that heroic retreat which every one knows.

After the fall of the Empire he lived quietly at Paris, loved and honoured by all.

His former colonel, broken down by advancing years and by the fatigues of service, had also retired from military life. He knew that General Cambronne was at Paris, and

invited him to dine with him. He also invited several old brothers-in-arms, and prepared quite a banquet for the occasion. The place of honour was given to Cambronne, on the right hand of the master of the house. When they were at table the colonel offered his guest a glass of old wine, of great price, which was always reserved for special occasions. Cambronne looked at his host with surprise. "What are you offering me?" he exclaimed.

"Why, some Rhenish wine, General, and of a very superior quality; it is more than a hundred years old; you will find none like it in Paris." And as Cambronne seemed irritated at his words, he added, "Why, General, I assure you it is excellent; just taste it, and you" . . .

"And my word of honour, colonel, my word of honour!" exclaimed Cambronne, striking the table. "And Nantes! and the prison! and the pardon! Have you forgotten it all, my good friend? For whom do you take Cambronne? From that very day a drop of wine has never touched my lips. I swore to you, and I have kept my word."

The colonel, full of admiration for such unfaltering fidelity, pressed his wine no longer, but commended himself anew for having preserved such a man to France.

Men correct their vices when they desire to do so. The word *impossible* is not in our language. Still less is it a Christian word. A firm resolution and an earnest desire overcome all obstacles.

THE HISTORY OF AN OLD BEGGAR.

At the door of one of the churches of Paris an old beggar, known by the name of Jacques, came every day, for many years, to sit on one of the steps of the temple and ask for alms. He seemed a downcast, miserable old man. He scarcely ever spoke, but contented himself with bending his head when anything was given to him. A gold cross might be seen upon his breast, only partially hidden by his tattered garments.

A young ecclesiastic, M. l'Abbé Paulin de —, celebrated Mass habitually at this church, and never omitted, as he entered, to give some small offering to poor Jacques.

Belonging to a rich and noble family, M. Paulin de — had consecrated himself to God in the priesthood, and

spent all his possessions among the poor. Without knowing him, old Jacques grew to love the good young priest.

One day the Abbé Paulin missed old Jacques from his accustomed place ; and as he remarked that his absence was prolonged, he grew uneasy about the old man and made inquiries as to where he lived ; and having learned his address, one morning, after Mass, he turned his steps towards the dwelling of old Jacques.

He knocked at the door of an attic on the sixth floor. A feeble voice answered from within, and he entered.

Jacques was lying stretched upon a miserable pallet ; his face was pale as death, his eyes were dull and heavy.

“ Ah ! it is you, Monsieur l’Abbé,” he said to the priest, when he saw him. “ It is very good of you to come and see a miserable man like me. . . I do not deserve it.”

“ What are you talking about, my good Jacques ?” said the Abbé. “ Do you not know that the priest is the friend of the unfortunate ? Besides,” he added, smiling, “ we are old acquaintances.” . . .

“ Oh ! Monsieur, if you knew ! . . . you would not speak to me like that. . . No, no ; do not speak to me kindly ; I am a miserable man, cursed by God.”

“ Cursed by God ! Do you think so ? Ah ! my poor Jacques, never utter such words as those. If you have done wrong—repent, confess ; God is infinite goodness ; He pardons everything to him who repents.”

“ Oh no ! He will never pardon me.”

“ And why not ? Do you not repent ?”

“ Repent ! do I repent ?” cried Jacques, raising himself upon his bed and gazing wildly at the priest. “ For thirty years I have been repenting. . . And yet I am cursed. . . cursed !”

The good priest tried to comfort and encourage him, but in vain. A terrible mystery was hidden in the depths of his heart, and despair prevented the guilty man from revealing his crime.

At last, conquered by the gentleness and the goodness of the Abbé, the miserable Jacques decided, and in a broken voice he told the following story :—

“ I was steward in a rich and noble family when the Revolution of the last century broke out. My master and

mistress were goodness itself to me. . . . M. le Comte, Madame la Comtesse, their two daughters, and their son. . . . I owed everything to them ; my position, my education, all the comforts I enjoyed. . . . When the Reign of Terror came, . . . I betrayed them. . . They were hidden, . . . I knew where, . . . I denounced them so that I might have their possessions, which were promised to the denunciators. . . . They were condemned to death, — all ! except the little Paulin, . . . who was too young." . . .

An involuntary cry came from the lips of the priest, and a cold sweat stood upon his forehead.

"Monsieur," continued the old beggar, who did not perceive the emotion excited by his words, "Monsieur, it was horrible ! . . . I heard them condemned to death. . . . I saw them all four placed in the tumbril, . . . and I saw their four heads fall beneath the knife. . . . Monster ! monster that I am ! . . . From that time I have known neither peace nor rest. . . . I weep, I pray for them. . . . I see them always,—there before me. See, they are there, beneath that curtain." . . .

And speaking thus, Jacques pointed with his trembling hand to a curtain which covered part of the wall. "This crucifix which you see over my bed belonged to Monsieur . . . ; and this little gold cross round my neck was the one which Madame always wore. . . . O God ! what crime ! what agony ! what repentance ! Monsieur l'Abbé, have pity upon me ! do not repulse me ! pray for the most criminal and the most miserable of men ! !"

The priest was kneeling by the bedside, pale as death. For many minutes he remained motionless. Then rising, perfectly calm, he made the sign of the cross, and drawing aside the curtain, he saw two portraits.

Jacques uttered a cry when he saw them, and threw himself back upon his pallet.

The priest was weeping.

"Jacques," he said in a trembling voice, "I am come to bring you pardon from God. I will hear your confession," and sitting by the bedside, he received old Jacques' confession.

When the dying man had ended : "Jacques," said the Abbé Paulin, "God has just forgiven you but that is not all . . . *I also*,—I forgive you . . . for love of

Him. For you have killed *my father, my mother, and my two sisters!!!*"

An expression of horror passed swiftly over the face of the dying man. He opened his lips; murmured some inarticulate words . . . then fell backwards on his bed. . . .

The priest approached. The beggar was dead.

THE OLD MAN.

EVERY one knows, at least by reputation, the great seminary of Saint Sulpice, established at Paris, close to the magnificent church of the same name.

This seminary was founded in the time of Louis XIII. by the Abbé Olier, a man of great virtue and sanctity.

Before establishing themselves at Paris, M. Olier and his first companions were all living together at Vaugirard, and preparing themselves by the practice of penance, prayer, poverty, the care of the unfortunate, in a word, by a Christian life, to become, in the hands of God, fitting instruments for the great designs He had formed concerning them.

M. Olier often assembled his pious companions in a common hall, and exhorted them with indefatigable zeal to advance in the path of perfection, to become holy priests; and with this end in view, to fight without ceasing, to mortify, to immolate the *old man*, that is to say, the evil inclinations of a nature corrupted by sin and inclined to evil by concupiscence.

The house was kept by an old gardener named Thomas, who lived with his wife in a little cottage at the end of the garden. Thomas had remarked these secret meetings of M. Olier and his disciples; he had spoken of them to his wife, and both had wondered what was the object of these assemblies. Old Thomas, as inquisitive as his wife, resolved one day to fathom the mystery, and having no other means of satisfying his curiosity, to go and listen at the door.

In the evening, on the very day that he had taken this noble resolution, M. Olier held a meeting. Thomas had noticed everything. He advances, therefore, upon the tips of his toes, presses one ear against the door, and hears some one speaking. He listens, he distinguishes the voice of M. Olier; and as the silence of the auditors was profound, he

distinctly hears these words: "My friends, my friends, why should we wait? Let us set to work this very day: too long our cowardice has shrunk from the task. Let us sacrifice the old man without pity, without listening to his murmurs and his cries. This is the only price upon which we can have peace. He is an enemy who is always seeking our destruction, who is always near to us, who will destroy us if we do not sacrifice him with courage. What is the use of making resolutions if we do not keep them. We must hesitate no longer, the moment is come. The old man must not live, everything must be given up to the new, &c."

Thomas was the only old man in the house; judge of his surprise and his terror when he heard M. Olier exhort his companions to sacrifice the *old man*! Evidently they were speaking of him, and talking of getting another gardener that very day to fill his place. Pale as death, he hurried back to his own home, and calling his wife in haste, he exclaimed, "Quick, quick, we must escape from here at once or we are lost. They are going to murder us, I heard them say so, this very evening. We have just time to pack up our things. Who would have believed it? Men who look so holy, and who have shown me so much kindness! You must never trust to appearances."

And then he began packing all his valuables in two or three large baskets, at the same time bewailing his hard fate, and giving his terrified wife full particulars of what he had just heard. But it was too late! Whilst he was making his preparations for flight, the door opened and M. Olier appeared upon the threshold.

"Thomas," he said gently, "we have been ringing for the last five minutes for supper; didn't you hear? Why . . . what are you doing? What is this luggage? Where are you going like this?"

Old Thomas fully believed his last moment was come, his hair stood up upon his head, he stammered an unintelligible reply . . . He tried to see if M. Olier held any kind of weapon in his hand; then he could contain himself no longer: "Wicked man! at last I know you! Hypocrite, traitor, assassin! I have heard everything . . . help! rescue!"

The poor Abbé stood perfectly bewildered. "Why, what is the matter with you, Thomas?" he said; "are you mad?"

“No, no, I am not mad!” cried the old gardener. “Would to God that I *were* mad! help! help! It is no use to pretend any longer; I tell you I have heard everything; I was at the door when you were encouraging your traitorous companions to kill me this very evening. Oh, what a wicked, cruel thing! When I loved you so much, why should you kill me? Could you not send me away if you had found another servant to fill my place?”

“But I cannot imagine what you mean,” replied M. Olier, more and more astonished. “Explain yourself; who ever thought of killing you?”

“You yourself, Monsieur.”

“I?”

“Ah yes! I recognised your voice, so holy that no other can come up to it. I heard you telling them to sacrifice the old man, who was always like an enemy in the house, and to hesitate no longer to follow your advice.”

At these words M. Olier understood the misunderstanding, and, laughing merrily, he ran out of the cottage to tell the story to his companions.

Then they all came back with him, and had the greatest trouble to persuade him that they were not talking of him. It was not till after a long time, and when he had talked often with the good Abbé, Olier, that he was convinced of his mistake and ceased to carry arms concealed in case of a surprise.

All of which proves that old people should not be inquisitive.

THE CALIPH, THE SHEPHERD, AND HAPPINESS.

A CALIPH of Bagdad, in what century I know not, was out hunting one day, when he was thrown off his horse, and would certainly have been killed if a shepherd had not stopped the courser at the risk of his own life.

Covered with wounds and bruises the Caliph was carried back to his palace; for even *Caliphs* are bruised and hurt if they fall down.

As soon as he was a little recovered he desired to see his preserver.

The poor shepherd was soon found, and brought to the palace, and into the presence of the sick potentate.

“You have saved my life, my son,” said he; “I desire to reward you for your services, therefore I swear to you by my beard that I will give you all that you shall ask. You see that my generosity is equal to my power.”

“Oh! Sire,” replied the shepherd, “I have not long to think. I should be perfectly happy if I had but one little thing, and that is a cottage of my own with a little garden, where I could live in peace with my wife and children.”

“You are not difficult to please,” said the Caliph, smiling; and calling the Vizier, he commanded him to give the shepherd immediately a little house and meadow situated near Bagdad.

And very enchanted was the shepherd then; so much so that on his way home he could scarcely refrain from singing for joy, and would stop every one he met to tell them of his good fortune, and that very evening he took possession of his new domain.

Not far from his house he had a neighbour, whose cottage was almost similar to his, and they soon made acquaintance with each other. This neighbour had a little flock of which he made quite a small income every year.

“I entirely forgot to ask the Caliph for some animals,” said our friend to himself one day; “my neighbour is far better off than I. What is the use of a field if you have neither cows nor sheep?”

And early the next morning he set off to the palace and asked to see the Caliph, who had given orders that he was always to be admitted.

“Well, my friend,” said the Prince kindly, “are you happy, and is your house comfortable?”

“Very comfortable, Sire,” replied the shepherd, “and I am very happy; but I find that there is one thing that is quite indispensable, and that is a flock like my neighbour’s. I shall never be comfortably off until I have some animals. I come to entreat your Majesty to bestow upon me just a few.”

“Certainly, you ought to have cattle if you have a field,” replied the Caliph; then—“See that he has what he wants, and let him choose amongst my flocks. Go, my friend, and be happy if you can at such a price.”

And the shepherd chose *just a few*, that is to say, two dozen and a half of the finest beasts the Caliph possessed.

"I shall be richer than my neighbour," he exclaimed, rubbing his hands gleefully. "Now I am the happiest man in the world."

Yes; but his field proved too small for such a handsome flock. And then only a quarter of a mile away there was a very pretty and productive farm.

Our friend could contain himself no longer. He grew troubled and discontented. "We shall never be happy," he said one evening to his wife, "until we have a little farm like that yonder; I am going to Bagdad on business; I shall try to see the Caliph, and ask him to give me that little property. What would that be to him?"

It was no sooner said than done. The demand was made the next day. The Caliph, after a friendly reproach, gave the farm; at the same time advising his protégé not to let his ideas of aggrandisement carry him too far.

"Oh, no," replied Ben Adab (that was the name of the peasant farmer), "there is no possibility of that now, for I have need of nothing more."

Nevertheless, three months after, he presented himself again before his benefactor, a little shamefaced, it is true, but fully determined to ask for something more.

He had seen a grand seignior of Bagdad; the splendour of his suite, his life of pleasure and repose, the magnificence of his palace had all proved so seductive that the farmer had said to himself: "I shall never be happy until all this pleasure and magnificence is mine;" and therefore, relying upon the promise of the all-powerful Caliph, he came again, requesting to be made a great lord.

The Caliph made objections, but was quickly reminded of his oath; he had sworn by his beard! Therefore, behold Ben Adab metamorphosed into a grand seignior, possessor of a splendid estate, owner of the most beautiful castles in the neighbourhood of Bagdad, waited on by thousands of slaves; he has only to utter a word, to express a desire, and everything is carried out according to his wishes. But he has nothing whatever to do; he can neither read nor write, and he finds that everything grows wearisome. . . .

"Upon my word," he said to himself at last, "I cannot live such a life as this. I was never born to live in obscurity. I must make a name in the world, and gain influence in the State—but in the sphere of politics! Ah! it is *there* that I am fitted to shine."

And after having well considered this idea, after having formed plans (sufficiently absurd as may well be imagined), after having safely compared his own capacities with those of the different government officials, he applied to the Caliph and informed him that if he desired to render him happy, and to carry out his word in full, he must give him the appointment of his first minister, the Grand Vizier.

The Caliph was on the point of growing angry and causing Ben Adab to expiate his vain temerity, when the idea struck him in a new and ridiculous light. Who could tell? Perhaps beneath this rugged bark there was concealed the germ of a great man. Briefly, he conceded his request, and commanded the turban of the Grand Vizier to be given him at once.

This self-elected vizier next enters upon his duties; and, to begin with, he understands nothing at all. He is beset with demands, with complaints, with petitions. He makes countless mistakes; he grants what he ought to refuse, and refuses what he ought to grant. The Caliph rejects some plans which he submits to his approval. He is indignant, distracted, ill at ease; he has never been so miserable.

"What a life! what a life!" he exclaimed one evening when retiring to rest; "is it possible for a vizier to live a month? I am only the chief slave of the Caliph. It is he who opposes me in everything that I wish to do. I see clearly how it is; in order to be happy and to be at peace it is necessary to be the master of all. . . . If the Caliph would give up his place to me, everything would go well."

He thought of it all the night. He grew more and more convinced that happiness could be secured only by absolute power; and the next morning, before the Caliph had risen, his self-elected vizier presented himself by his bedside and humbly requested him to allow him to take his place.

The Caliph thought he was dreaming; he rubbed his eyes, he sprang up in astonishment; he called a slave to bite his finger (who, having bitten too hard, was immediately condemned to receive a hundred strokes of the bastinado).

"What did you say? repeat it," he said to Ben Adab.

"I said, Sire, that you ought to let me reign in your

stead, and that this would be a great gain to every one, to the empire, to me, to yourself."

The monarch heard perfectly well this time. He rose, put on his robe, and clapped his hands. Four black slaves instantly appeared. "Turn round," he said to the vizier. Ben Adab turned. The Caliph took his spring and bestowed on him a vigorous kick, according to the Eastern fashion; then made a sign to his negroes, who seized upon the astounded vizier and hastened him on with a similar accompaniment as far as the palace gates. There they stripped him of his garments and left him in his shirt, exposed to the laughter of every passer-by.

Ashamed and confused, Ben Adab returned to his lowly calling of a shepherd, and at last died miserably. And can you guess, dear reader, who this *Ben Adab* is? Perhaps you may find him, or, at least, his counterpart, a little nearer than Bagdad. Perhaps in your own house; perhaps in your own room; perhaps in the very clothes you wear.

Yes, for this history is your own, it is the history of us all. We are ever seeking after happiness, and imagine we shall find it in the grade above our own. When we have enjoyed this position for a little time, we try to make another step upwards, and thus we are ever seeking and yet never find.

And we are miserable—miserable through our own fault! Because we do not seek happiness there where it truly is, even in our own hearts. Because we believe that happiness depends upon our position whilst it truly consists in the *disposition* with which we fulfil all the *duties* of our position whatever it may be. We are called to be happy, rich and poor, governing and governed, small and great. *For happiness God hath in love bestowed on every creature in His great creation.* He alone is happy who endures with patience and serenity those trials which are inseparable from the human lot, who draws from the love of God that peace of heart which surpasses all vain earthly ideas of an unattainable felicity, who remembers that life does not last for long, and that all its troubles, if borne in a Christian spirit, will be succeeded by marvellous joys which nothing shall have power to disturb.

In a word, he alone is happy who is a good and faithful Christian. May we all be of this number, and profit by this simple story of *the Caliph, the Shepherd, and Happiness.*

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. CECILIA, ST. VALERIAN, AND ST. TIBURTIUS.

IN the reign of the Emperor Alexander Severus, under the Pontificate of St. Urban, in the year 230 of the Christian era, there lived at Rome a young virgin named Cecilia.

Rich, noble, and beautiful, Cecilia united to the choicest gifts of nature the still more precious gifts of grace. She was a Christian, though her family was heathen; and the beautiful years of her early youth were passed in prayer, in sweet meditation on the law of God, in the austerities of penance, and in the indefatigable practice of all good works. The book of the Gospels, hidden beneath her robe, rested always on her breast; and, burning with a pure and holy love for our Lord Jesus Christ, Cecilia had solemnly vowed to have no other spouse than He. Nevertheless, the time approached when the Christian maiden would have to contend for the power to keep her promise. Incapable of understanding the sublime love which attached the heart of their child to heaven, her parents had sought a husband for her, and the spouse of Christ had been constrained to receive a suitor amongst men.

Valerian was the name of the young Roman destined, in the eyes of the world, to obtain the hand of Cecilia. His nobility, his beauty, the qualities of his mind and heart all rendered him worthy of such an honour. He had a brother named Tiburtius, and rejoiced with this brother, whom he tenderly loved, over the happiness in store for him. Neither understood the divine nature and the eternal duration of that happiness which Cecilia was to bring to them.

The virgin saw with fear the day of her bridal approaching, but also with that superhuman calm which faith alone can give to Christians. She had redoubled her prayers, her alms, and her penances. She wore haircloth beneath the rich embroideries of her sumptuous robe, and thus chastised her delicate flesh, and prepared herself for the terrible combats that she would doubtless soon have to sustain for Jesus Christ. Our Lord came to her Himself, and, in order to give her more courage, He allowed her guardian-angel to become visible to her eyes, and to promise her, in the name of God, a continual assistance.

Nevertheless the fatal day arrived ; the heart of Valerian beat high with joy, and the whole nobility of Rome assisted at the nuptials of the daughter of Cecilius.

On the evening of this great day, as soon as Cecilia was alone with Valerian, filled with virtue from on high, she made known to her bridegroom in sweet and simple words that she was a Christian, that she had devoted her life to her Lord and Saviour, and that she belonged to herself no more. She added that an angel of God watched over her, and that if Valerian were but willing to enter into her views, this angel would love him even as herself, and would manifest to them both his divine beauty.

The young man, troubled by these words, but captivated by the charm of that pure voice, and already secretly touched by the grace of God, answered the virgin : " What sayest thou, Cecilia ? and how can I believe thy words ? Let me, too, see this angel. When I shall have seen him, and shall feel assured that he is an angel of God, then I will obey thee, but if thou lovest a man like unto myself, I will pierce him through with my sword and will kill thee with him." The virgin replied calmly and sweetly : " If thou wilt follow my counsel, if thou wilt purify thyself in the fountain of the waters which spring forth to eternal life, if thou wilt believe in the one only living God who reigns in heaven, thine eyes shall see the holy angel who watches over thy bride."

" And who will purify me that I may see thy angel ?" replied Valerian in astonishment.

" Near here there dwells a holy old man who can purify thee, that thou mayest see the angel of God."

" Where is this old man ?"

" Go out from the town ; by the third column thou wilt find some of the poor, who know me and whom I love. Thou shalt say to them : ' Cecilia sends me to you ; lead me to the holy old man Urban.' Then thou shalt see him, and shalt be obedient to his word. He will clothe thee in a new garment ; and upon thy return thou shalt see the holy angel then become thy friend, and whatever thou shalt ask him he will grant thee."

Without any effort, and urged by an unseen power, the young Roman left the virgin whose chaste accents had completely changed his heart. He went his way in haste, and in the early dawn he reached the Catacombs. Brought

into the presence of the Pope, St. Urban, he related all that had passed. The Pope instructed him in Christianity, spoke to him of Jesus Christ, and answered all his doubts. Whilst he was catechising him, a venerable old man, in garments of unearthly whiteness, and holding in his hand a gilded book, appeared suddenly in their midst; a bright light shone around his head. It was the great Apostle of the pagans—St. Paul, the second pillar of the Roman Church. At this wonderful vision, Valerian, overcome with fear, fell as though lifeless, his face downward to the earth. But he felt himself uplifted, and the great Apostle speaking, said: “Read the words of this book and believe; thou shalt merit to be purified and to behold the angel of the most faithful virgin, Cecilia thy spouse.”

Valerian raised his eyes, and read this passage: “*One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.*” “Believest thou,” said the Apostle, “believest thou this?” Valerian cried with transport, “Nothing is truer under heaven; there is nothing that I believe more firmly!” As he spoke these words the vision disappeared and he remained alone with the Pontiff. Then Urban led to the fountain of salvation him whom Heaven itself had instructed, and when he had admitted him to the most sacred mysteries of the faith of Christ, he told him to return to his spouse.

She had not left the nuptial chamber, whose very atmosphere seemed laden with a fragrance not of earth. All the night long she had been praying. Valerian, wearing the white robe of the neophytes in which he had just been arrayed, entered Cecilia's chamber, and his reverent gaze fell first upon his kneeling bride; but by her side, his face all radiant with the light and glory of another world than ours, stood the angel of the Lord, holding in his hands two crowns of lilies and of roses. He placed one upon the head of Cecilia and the other upon that of Valerian. “Merit,” he said to them, “to preserve these crowns by the purity of your hearts and the sanctity of your bodies. Now, O Valerian, son of the truth of Christ, because thou hast acquiesced in the pure desires of Cecilia, the Son of God has sent me to thee to grant all thy petitions.”

Valerian, full of gratitude, only asked that the same light which enlightened him might also enlighten and regenerate the soul of his brother. “Blessed be thou, child of God,”

replied the angel, "God is pleased with thy request. He grants thee the soul of thy dearly loved brother, and soon you shall both be glorified with the palm of martyrdom." No words can express the holy joy of Cecilia and Valerian.

Tiburtius, desiring to be the first of all to congratulate his brother and his sister, arrived soon afterwards. "What is the sweet fragrance that fills the room?" he asked. "It seems as if I were surrounded by lilies and roses, yet the season for these is past." Valerian immediately took advantage of these words to unveil to him the mysteries of that sacred night. Tiburtius could not believe what he heard. Then Cecilia explained to him the truths of Christianity with all the authority of a tried, undoubting faith, and with that winning grace which accompanied all her words. And at the end of two hours, convinced of the truth, and aspiring after the grace of baptism, Tiburtius set forth, accompanied by Valerian, to seek out the holy Pontiff in the Catacombs.

Some months after, summoned before the tribunal of the cruel Almachius, Prefect of Rome, who was furious against the Christians, Valerian and Tiburtius generously confessed the name of their Divine Master. Bleeding beneath the lashes of their persecutors, Valerian cried to all present in a ringing voice, "Romans, my brothers, be firm in the faith. Let not the sight of my torments shake your courage. Confess the truth. Everything in this world passes by, pain as well as pleasure. Fix your hearts on Him who alone abides for ever, the CHRIST, the Son of the living God; He alone is the Lord, and the Roman idols are but wood and stone!"

Condemned to be beheaded, the two brothers were conducted out of Rome. Upon the way they spoke of the true God to the centurion Maximus who accompanied them, and gained him over to Jesus Christ. They passed the night in a house close to the place of suffering. There Cecilia came to them for a last farewell. Aided by Valerian and Tiburtius, she preached to the soldiers. All asked for baptism. Priests, sent by her, instructed and baptized these new children of God. The night was passed in prayer, in acts of thanksgiving, in touching farewells.

At the dawn of day, the sacrifice of the two noble martyrs was consummated; their bleeding heads had fallen at the feet of the statue of Jupiter. Maximus followed their example without delay. Having refused to lend his aid in the cruel martyrdom of the two heroes, he was cited before

the bar of Almachius ; there he confessed Jesus Christ, and the Prefect had him killed immediately with the stripes of loaded scourges. Filled with holy pride at such triumphs as these, Cecilia herself preserved the sacred remains of her husband, of her brother, and of Maximus ; and the Pope St. Urban placed them with honour in the crypts of the Catacombs. Cecilia, knowing that her hour was near, prepared herself with fervour for the combat. She gave the rest of her possessions to the poor. She preached Jesus Christ with renewed ardour, and during these last days of her life she gained over to the Christian faith more than four hundred persons, whom the Pontiff came to baptize himself in the house of the virgin, the spouse of Christ. It was in the midst of these holy works that she was summoned to appear at the Prætorium.

It was on the 19th of November that Cecilia, attired as the ladies of the Roman nobility upon festival days, presented herself at the tribunal.

"What is thy name?" demanded the cruel Prefect, enraged at the sight of so gentle, yet so fearless a victim.

"Amongst men I am called Cecilia," replied the virgin ; "but Christian is my noblest name."

"What is thy condition?"

"I am a native of Rome, of a noble and patrician race."

"Of that I am aware ; it is of thy religion that I question thee."

"Then thy interrogation was inexact, since it required two answers."

"And whence comes thy assurance?" asked Almachius, greatly disconcerted.

"From a pure conscience and an undoubting faith in the CHRIST, the Son of God."

"Knewest thou not, proud woman, that our divine emperors have given me power over thy life or death? art thou ignorant that it is forbidden to confess that name?"

"Firmness is not pride," replied Cecilia. "Thy emperors are in error as well as thyself. Their law proves our innocence. If it were a crime to confess this Name, should we be willing to suffer for an evil cause? If thou didst not fear to hear the truth, I would point out to thee, besides, that thou hast just uttered an undoubted falsehood."

"How so?" said the astonished Prefect.

"Thou saidst that thy princes had given thee power over life and death. Thou hast lied in saying that."

"I lied?" repeated Almachius in bewilderment.

"Yes," answered Cecilia; "thou hast only power over death. Thou canst kill, but canst thou give or restore life? Say, therefore, that thy emperors have made thee the minister of death, but nothing more."

Almachius restrained his fury.

"Miserable woman," he said, "forsake these vain chimeras. Thou hast fallen into error, and thy example seduces others. Why shouldst thou prefer to suffer when thou canst enjoy pleasures and riches?"

"Thou speakest like a man of little wisdom," said the virgin with severe majesty. "Thou art ignorant of what thou savest. For us, children of the light, we know the truth. We prepare ourselves by work for the rest that is to come. We live, it is true, in poverty and penance; but the day is coming when we shall reap the fruit of our sacrifices. To suffer and to die for Jesus Christ is to us a gain; we shall rejoice for ever. But those who, in their blindness, now triumph and rejoice, shall weep for all eternity."

"Then," replied the Prefect, "we and our invincible emperors shall have for our heritage nothing but eternal woe?"

"Thou and thy princes," cried Cecilia; "are you not men, and must you not die? God shall judge you, and you shall render to Him a terrible account for your power."

"Enough of this," said the Prefect, beside himself with anger, and pointing to the statues of Jupiter, of Mars, and of Romulus: "Sacrifice to the gods," he said, "or thou shalt die."

"To the gods?" said Cecilia gravely. "Art thou blind? Where seest thou gods? For my part I see nothing but stones sculptured by the hand of man, and for two talents of gold I will make thee as many of these gods as thou shalt desire. God is in heaven. Since thou hast been speaking to me, thou hast said nothing of which I have not shown thee the falsity and the injustice. Do with me what shall please thee; the CHRIST is in my heart, and He will enable me to triumph over the whole universe."

Trembling with rage, he ordered the Christian maiden to be led back to her own house. Executioners followed her, with orders to suffocate her with the flaming vapour of the

caldron belonging to the bath. Almachius feared a mutiny if she should suffer in public. The virgin was shut up within this hall, which is still to be seen at Rome. During the whole of the day and the night her executioners urged on the fires of the caldron in vain. Like the young Hebrews in the burning furnace of Babylon, Cecilia, miraculously preserved, sang the praises of God, and enjoyed the freshness of a celestial dew.

Almachius learned this miracle with terror; in dismay he sent a lictor with orders to cease from useless efforts, and to cut off the head of this woman whom the fire could not harm. The executioner struck three times, but his hands faltered and failed to deal out death, and so he fled, leaving Cecilia stretched bleeding on the flagstones of the bath.

The holy martyr lived three days, dying in slow agony. Surrounded by the poor, of whom she was the mother, she preached Jesus Christ to them with her dying breath. The Pope St. Urban received her last sighs. Before now, she had given her house to the Roman Church, desiring that it should be changed into a Christian sanctuary.

The Pope, out of respect for this holy body, would not allow any one to touch it, but placed it himself in a coffin of cypress, in the same posture in which it had been left by the blessed soul of the virgin martyr when it had taken its flight to the bosom of God. It was carried with due solemnity to the Catacombs, and laid near to the bodies of St. Valerian, St. Tiburtius, and St. Maximus.

About three hundred years after, during the Pontificate of Clement VIII., it was found intact; it was lying on the right side, the hands clasped and near to the knees, the head cut by the sword and turned to the ground. It was clothed in a white robe richly embroidered in gold. Cloths stained with blood were at the feet of the virgin martyr. Her precious relics were then united to those of her husband, his brother, St. Maximus, and St. Urban, and transported to the basilica of St. Cecilia (at Rome); it is the very house in which Cecilia died. They are venerated beneath the high altar of this celebrated church, and forty lamps burn night and day before them.

The 22nd of November is the feast of St. Cecilia.

May this holy virgin deign to pray for our country, and obtain for it the grace of faith, of conversion, and of final perseverance.

THE CATACOMBS OF ROME.

THE name of *Catacombs* (Greek *kata, kumbos*) has been given to the immense subterranean vaults, which the Christians excavated all round the city during the three first centuries of the Church, in order that they might religiously bury their dead, and might celebrate the holy mysteries without fear, and also as a place of refuge during the fury of persecution.

It is impossible to give any idea of the immensity of this subterranean city, composed of long narrow corridors cut out of the soft sandy rock, and intersecting one another to such an extent that no one could fail to lose their way, who attempted to traverse them without the help of a guide or of a very long experience.

There are about thirty catacombs known to us. The largest and most celebrated is the Catacomb (or cemetery) of St. Calixtus, so called from the name of the Pope whose body was laid there in 222, after his martyrdom. In this catacomb a number of Popes and holy martyrs were interred, amongst others the famous Roman virgin St. Cecilia, and the glorious companions of her combat. The exact number of Christians laid to rest in the galleries of the Catacombs is not known, but without doubt it is immense. The Catacomb of St. Calixtus alone contains many millions. Only a few corridors of this catacomb are shown to visitors, and although this takes up about two hours, not more than a *hundredth part* can be seen in that time.

Formerly the Catacombs were entered by holes and secret staircases excavated in the gardens or cellars of rich Christians. In the night the earth which had been thrown up by the gravediggers, was conveyed into the adjacent country and sold; and it was also under cover of the night that the remains of the Christians, and especially of those martyrs who had suffered death in confessing the faith, were carried into the Catacombs.

The Pontiff or priest, hidden in the depths of the catacomb, with one of the brethren to keep watch, held himself in readiness at the time appointed. Accompanied by some of the faithful, the parents or friends of the martyr, he advanced to the entrance of the catacomb; there he received

the sacred remains of the soldier of Christ ; by the light of lamps and torches he bore them to that place of repose which was already prepared, and there, after having recited, in union with those present, the last prayers for the dead and also the canticles of eternal hope, the holy body was laid in a cavity, hollowed, like the case of a drawer, out of the walls of the gallery or chamber ; a slab of marble, prepared for this purpose, was now placed over the opening of the tomb and sealed with cement, in which a small vial full of the martyr's blood or some instrument of his suffering was usually enclosed ; then they hurriedly engraved upon the marble the name of him who slept within its shadows, they added a palm or a crown, the sign of his triumph, and sometimes the age, the beautiful characteristics of this Christian, and some other words or symbols of faith, affection, or regret.

The galleries of the Catacombs are very narrow ; scarcely more than two can walk conveniently abreast. Their elevation varies from seven to eight feet in height ; the air is damp and heavy. On each side, placed horizontally one above the other, are the tombs of the early Christians. In the greater part we remark a white dust scattered over these venerable relics, produced by the mingling of bones and by the lime which was often used to envelop the bodies. At each step we meet with marbles bearing inscriptions, of which many are of the highest importance as regards religious science.

Scholars and Christian antiquaries who study these inscriptions are thus enabled to prove, by arguments which cannot be gainsayed, that the early Christians had the same belief and the same religious practices as ourselves.

The Catacombs are filled with chapels, almost all of which are full of interest because of the paintings they contain. Although many of these pictures are deteriorated by time, by humidity, by falling earth, and by saltpetre, they are sufficient to establish in the most certain manner many of our Catholic dogmas, which Protestants attack as innovations ; amongst others, the veneration of images, the invocation of the Blessed Virgin and of the Saints, the remission of sins in the Sacrament of Penance, the solemn celebration of the Mass, the real presence of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist, Purgatory, prayers for the dead, faith in the intercession of

the Saints, the pastoral charge of St. Peter and his successors with regard to the flock of the disciples of Jesus Christ, the mission of the Apostles to teach and save souls, &c.

These ancient frescoes upon the walls of the chapels are very imperfect, and bear marks of the eagerness of artists who feared to be surprised by an enemy at any moment, and who worked not in order to charm the eyes, but rather to move the heart to faith and love. The expression of all these pictured faces is one of intense solemnity, with which is even mingled a half wild or terrified expression. The horrors of persecution, the ever-imminent approach of death, detachment from earth, and the love of Jesus Christ crucified, all may be traced in these portraits on the walls.

We have said that there are many chapels in these subterranean vaults, and the greater part bear witness to that divine worship which our fathers formerly celebrated. We may see the place of the principal altar, beneath which three bodies of the most celebrated martyrs rest side by side. The altar, let into the wall and arched, was four or five feet in depth; the arch was decorated with paintings, usually representing the Good Shepherd carrying His sheep upon His shoulders, or the holy martyrs whose bodies rested beneath the sacred stone. The faithful assisted at the holy sacrifice, and the deacons carried Communion to those who, uniting their intention, prayed in the galleries and adjacent chambers, being unable from want of sufficient space to enter the chapel where mass was being said.

We see in the principal chapels of the Catacombs seats of stone used by the ancient Popes during the solemnity of the Masses; and amongst others that upon which the Pope St. Stephen was surprised and decapitated by the soldiers of the Emperor Decius, during the terrible persecution raised by that Prince in 257. He was celebrating the holy mysteries upon the very place where the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul reposed.

Around these pontifical chairs we see also the bench cut out of the stone where the Presbytery sat—that is to say, the College of Cardinal Priests who assisted the Pontiff in all the necessities of his august ministry.

And in our own days still, in all the Papal chapels the Sovereign Pontiff is never seen at the foot of the altars without being surrounded by the Sacred College of the

Cardinals of the Roman Church, successors of the ancient presbyters.

No words can express the impression left upon the mind by the pilgrimage of the Catacombs. A variety of feelings, which are all most salutary, seem to take possession of the heart; the nothingness of the things of this world, the wisdom of the Christian life which esteems only that which endures for ever, and counts as worthless all the vanities of the world; the immutable strength of the Church, which has vanquished in such combats, and which to-day, ever the same both in faith and in practice, holds an unrivalled sway—by virtue of her stability, her greatness, and her powerful, ever fruitful life—over all ages of the world and each succeeding generation of mankind . . . happiness in being a Christian like to the heroes whose ashes rest here; shame at resembling them so little in fervour, detachment, contempt of this present life, and strength of faith; such are some few of the thoughts and feelings which rush in upon the soul on a visit to the Catacombs.

On going out, dazzled by the brilliant light of an Italian sun, we regret to leave these grand and solemn witnesses of the past, and yet experience some sensation of relief upon passing out from the dwellings of the dead, to find ourselves once more amongst the living . . .

SOUVENIRS OF ROME.

IN proportion as time passes by, and we find ourselves still further and further from the first ages of the Church, faith grows cold; and it seems as if even the life of our Lord and of His Apostles becomes less true, less full of interest, and less powerful to touch our hearts, because of the centuries that lie between.

Less distracted by business and the pleasures of the world, our fathers went to Rome and to Jerusalem to invigorate their faith. There were neither railroads nor steamboats, but they set out on foot, carrying a pilgrim's staff, asking hospitality at the convents and houses that they passed upon their way, sometimes reduced to beg their bread along the road, devoting months or years to accomplish their pilgrimage.

I would propose to you to accompany me in spirit on

this journey to Rome, which God has given me the grace to accomplish, and to kneel thus at the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul ; to descend into the Catacombs where the bodies of so many martyrs have reposed, and to visit the churches where these glorious relics are now venerated.

The city of Rome is almost as large as Paris, and yet it has only 150,000 inhabitants. A great part of it is covered with ruins which attest its ancient power, with churches whose spires and domes arise upon all sides, and with convents and their far-stretching gardens.

Nineteen centuries ago, when Jesus Christ came into the world, and when Paris was only a little fishing village, Rome was the mistress of the universe. The Romans held possession of Italy, France, Spain, half of Germany, European and Asiatic Turkey, Egypt, Algiers, &c. After each new conquest they raised in their capital a triumphal arch or a temple to the false gods of the vanquished people. Thus Rome became the most beautiful, the most wealthy, and most richly adorned of all the cities of the earth.

To judge by the ruins which remain of this ancient town the life of the people was passed chiefly at the baths and at the theatres. A single establishment of baths (and each emperor built a new one) occupied the space of an entire neighbourhood. A single hall of the hot baths of Diocletian, restored by Michael Angelo, became the great Church of St. Mary of the Angels. These baths were adorned with columns, statues, mosaics, and were large enough to receive gratuitously all those who came there to pass away their time. The amphitheatres, erected for games and public spectacles, were no less vast ; and the Coliseum, whose walls and seats are still partially standing, contained 200,000 seated spectators.

It was to this great city, wholly engrossed in its conquests and its pleasures, that St. Peter came to preach the Gospel. Surely an enterprise truly divine ! Picture to yourself a stranger coming from a distant eastern land, with neither arms nor treasures, announcing a new doctrine in the name of a crucified God, and preaching mortification and charity to cruel and voluptuous men.

The old Church of St. Prudentia still marks the place where St. Peter received hospitality at the house of the senator Pudens, and a simple table is preserved there which served as an altar to the Prince of the Apostles ! His

preaching soon converted the Romans by thousands, as it had converted the Jews at Jerusalem, and it was visible to all that the hand of God was with him.

At that time another Simon (St. Peter himself had borne the name of Simon before his vocation to the apostleship) excited the curiosity of the Romans by false miracles and magical practices, and had attracted great numbers. Secretly jealous of St. Peter, who had refused to sell to him the gift of miracles, Simon sought from the powers of evil help to work wonders, which he declared to be so many proofs of the falsity of Christianity.

One day he proclaimed that he would be lifted up from the ground in an open public place ; judge of the immense throng that gathered together to see such an extraordinary sight. The Emperor Nero came himself with all his suite. St. Peter also came, but with far different thoughts. He knelt down in a corner apart, upon a flagstone in the street, and began to pray to God to confound this impostor and this enemy of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, at the appointed time, Simon the magician rose majestically in the air amidst the applause of all the spectators. But the prayers of the Apostle quickly prevailed over the infernal power of the magician, and suddenly he fell, as though struck by lightning, and dashed his head against the earth. The crowd dispersed, bewildered and discontented, and loudly accusing the Christians, whose enemy Simon was, as the cause of this misfortune.

Thus of these two Simons, one, by giving himself up to the devil, perished miserably upon the very day when he expected to attain to the height of honour and fortune ; the other, by giving himself to God, acquired an immortal glory by his virtues, his humility, and his courageous faith. All must choose between two destinies. Each one among us must be either the servant of God or the slave of the devil.

St. Peter had prayed with so much energy that God was willing to preserve by a new miracle the remembrance of his prayer, and hence there remained, deeply engraven upon the stone where the Apostle had knelt, the impress of his knees. This stone is religiously preserved in the Church of St. Françoise Romaine, built upon the very spot where this miracle took place. Nevertheless, the pagans, secretly jealous of the virtues of the Christians, accused them of all public misfortunes, and sought for any pretext

by which they might let loose their anger against them. Virtue is always detested by those who have not the courage to imitate it.

The Emperor Nero, a true monster of cruelty, and the murderer of his own mother, in order to get rid of these importunate disciples of Jesus Christ, conceived the most odious and cruel project that can be imagined. One evening he set fire to the four quarters of Rome.

From the terraces of his palace, the immense ruins of which are still to be seen upon Mount Palatine, he contemplated with ferocious joy this terrible spectacle. Separated by vast gardens from the scene of the fire, he saw extending at his feet the flames which he himself had kindled, and listened to the groans of the unfortunate people surprised by this catastrophe.

The following day he accused the Christians of his own crime ; he gave the order to arrest them all and to deliver them to the vengeance of the laws and the fury of the people. Then were the most frightful sufferings devised ; some were thrown to the lions and tigers, others were drowned in boiling oil, others torn to pieces by iron combs, and others, finally, covered with melted pitch and lighted like torches in Nero's gardens.

At the very commencement of this persecution, St. Peter resolved to leave the ungrateful city and to carry the Word of God elsewhere. He took his pilgrim's staff and directed his steps towards one of the gates of Rome, when suddenly Jesus Christ appeared to him coming to meet him and entering the city. "Lord, where goest Thou?" cried the Apostle at the sight of his Divine Master. "I am going to be crucified a second time," replied Jesus. And at these words He disappeared, leaving, as the only trace of His appearance, the impress of His sacred feet on a stone upon the road.

St. Peter understood that Jesus Christ was going to suffer in His members, that is to say, in His persecuted Church. He felt that the moment was come when he might make reparation for the weakness he had shown during the Passion of the Saviour, and that he might have the happiness to atone with his blood for the sin for which he had ever bitterly wept, but the remembrance of which no tears had been able to efface. He retraced his steps, and a few days after he was arrested and cast into prison.

The stone which received the impress of the sacred feet

of Jesus is still preserved, and in order that the memory of this event should not be lost, a little church has been built upon the exact place where our Lord appeared.

Let us now descend into the dungeon where St. Peter is a prisoner; it is a dark, damp, narrow vault, with no opening but a miserable staircase. In a corner, a column marks the place where the Prince of the Apostles was chained. His chains themselves are venerated in a church situated not far from there, which bears their name, St. Peter's Chains. They are formed of heavy iron rings, and consist of two chains which are both attached to an iron collar.

It was thus that the first Pope was fastened in his dungeon, in the midst of a crowd of malefactors who, like the wicked thief, overwhelmed him with blasphemy and raillery. But, nevertheless, he preached to them Jesus crucified, and at the sound of his calm and holy voice, thieves and forgers, gaolers and soldiers, were moved, touched, converted. Soon many amongst them asked to be baptized, and as there was no water in the prison, the Apostle renewed for them the miracle of Moses. A spring came forth from the ground, which has not ceased to flow for eighteen centuries, and at which all pilgrims freely drink without ever exhausting its waters. Almost all these new children of the Church paid the price of their conversion with their blood, and shared the glory of martyrdom with their father in the faith.

St. Peter remained a long time in prison, but his trial was not long; he was the chief of the Christians—that sufficed. As a Jew he was condemned to be crucified. He was led to the foot of Mount Vatican in Nero's circus. Arrived at the place of his martyrdom, he only asked one favour from his persecutors, and that was to crucify him with his head downwards; he did not think himself worthy to die as Jesus Christ had died. It was granted him, and this time, seeking strength and courage from God, he died with heroic resignation and holy joy. Happy he who can value thus the grace of suffering as his Lord and Master suffered, and to whom the crosses that God sends him are only too beautiful for him to bear.

II.

A simple stone with this inscription: **HERE PETER WAS CRUCIFIED**, points out to the pilgrim the place where St. Peter died. It is the very place upon which his cross was erected.

When we have thus followed, as it were, step by step in the footprints of the great Apostle, when we have seen his first altar, kissed his chains, visited his prison and the place of his martyrdom, we feel as if we were much nearer to him, and as if his glorious life were only just completed. And, after all, what difference does it make that these things happened eighteen centuries ago? Should they therefore have less interest for us now? Are we not sons of that Church of which Peter was the first Vicar? Was it not from Rome that the faith was first brought into our country? And even till this day, is it not from the tomb of St. Peter that the words come to us which lead to eternal life?

Let us go, therefore, to this sacred tomb; it is there that all the grandeur of the Apostle is manifested; and to honour him worthily, the Church has surpassed in magnitude all that the power of man has ever produced. St. Peter's is the largest, the highest, the most spacious church in the world; by its vast extent it seems to cover the pilgrims of the whole earth, and whatever the number of the faithful, it always appears deserted. The walls are adorned with the richest marbles of every variety; the pictures themselves partake of the solidity of the edifice, and are secure from the ravages of time, for they are composed of mosaics, that is to say, of stones of different colours joined and shaded with infinite art. Many churches of Rome are adorned with mosaics of the time of Constantine, that is to say, more than fourteen centuries ago, and they have not the less preserved their brilliancy.

On the right, within the church, is the famous statue of St. Peter, one of the feet of which is worn by the kisses of the pilgrims. At the bottom of the church, enchased with bronze, is the ancient seat where the holy Apostle sat to preach the Gospel. Lastly, in the centre of the edifice, beneath the gigantic cupola, each one comes to kneel at his very tomb. Twelve dozen lamps, which burn night and day, surround this sacred monument, and are a symbol of the undying glory of the first Head of the Church.

He died so long ago, say those who know nothing of the Church of God; but instead of being a reason for indifference or forgetfulness, the eighteen centuries which have elapsed since the martyrdom of St. Peter furnish one of the most brilliant proofs of Catholic truth. Whilst the palaces of emperors, the temples of false gods, the amphitheatres

and baths have turned to dust, the tomb of the crucified Apostle has endured throughout the ages. And to this very day the magnificent cupola, beneath which he reposes, rises majestically above the forgotten tombs of his persecutors.

The remembrance of St. Paul and of his stay at Rome is as vivid as that of St. Peter. Under the Church of Santa Maria *in via lata*, in the centre of the city, is a subterranean vault composed of three little rooms. It was formerly a ground floor, but the ruins and the débris which accumulate everywhere upon the Roman soil have gradually closed up the windows, and the room can only be entered by a staircase of twenty steps. It was there that St. Paul lived for three years, there that he wrote many of his epistles to the faithful of Greece and of the East. St. Luke was with him, and it was there that he composed the Book of the Acts of the Apostles.

St. Paul gloried in being in chains for Jesus Christ. He was closely watched by many soldiers; and if he enjoyed a little more liberty than other Christians he only owed it to his title of a Roman citizen. But soon the persecution became fiercer, and he was sent to rejoin St. Peter in the Mamertine prison, in that frightful dungeon deprived of air and light, where the fisherman of Galilee was baptizing the newly converted in a miraculous fountain. Judged at the same time, they were condemned to perish on the same day, only, instead of being crucified, St. Paul, as a Roman citizen, was sentenced to be beheaded. They quitted their prison to walk together to the place of suffering, and after having conversed some time on the reward which awaited them, they were separated by their executioners, and said farewell till they should meet again, a few hours afterwards in heaven. The place where they embraced for the last time has been marked by the erection of a church, upon the pediment of which the last words that they spoke to each other are engraved. Having arrived without the town, at the place of his suffering, St. Paul knelt calmly down, and heard without trembling the stroke of the sword which was to terminate his life. His head, in falling, rebounded as though urged by some extraordinary force, and struck the ground in three places, from which issued three fountains, a figure of those abundant graces of which he should be the source even after his death. These fountains

are now enclosed within a church, where the stone upon which the apostle placed his head is also venerated. Not far from there, and also without the town, stands the magnificent Church of St. Paul, upon the spot where he was buried. This venerable monument, which dates from the fourth century, and which was almost entirely destroyed by fire thirty years ago, rises to-day from its ruins richer and more beautiful than ever. Even infidels and schismatics have desired to render homage to the apostle of all nations ; and the great altar of malachite, given by the Emperor of Russia, is placed between four columns of alabaster sent by the Pasha of Egypt. All round the church the portraits of the Popes are represented in a long series of medallions in mosaic. Each one of these portraits is a link in the long, uninterrupted chain which unites us to the apostles of Jesus Christ. Let us glory in belonging to that ever living and immutable Church, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail.

ST. PETER'S.

WHAT Rome is to the world, St. Peter's is to Rome.

Rome is the holy city, the centre of the Catholic faith, the citadel of truth, the very sanctuary of the Catholic religion. And of all the temples that are enclosed within this one vast temple, St. Peter's is the chief ; it is the central point of religious faith in Rome, and her most magnificent crown. Every one can understand why. Within these sacred walls repose the relics of the Prince of the Apostles, the first Bishop of Rome, the first of the long line of Pontiffs, the first Vicar of Jesus Christ. And close by, in an immense palace near to the church, the Pontiff lives, —the successor of St. Peter, the Vicar of the Son of God, and Sovereign Pastor of all the Christians upon the face of the whole earth.

After having preached Christianity in Rome for twenty-five years, St. Peter, with the apostle St. Paul, was arrested by the command of Nero, during the first persecution which that cruel Emperor waged against the Christians.

The sumptuous gardens and the vast circus which Nero had consecrated to the public games and races became the theatre of the first victories of Christianity. These heroes, of a type hitherto unknown, became in death triumphant.

The celebrated colonnade of St. Peter now occupies the place where the ancient circus stood. It is also related that an Emperor of Germany, having come to Rome to visit the Pope, and asking him for some relics of the Prince of the Apostles, the Pontiff replied : "To touch these sacred bones is what I may not, dare not do." Then, stooping down and presenting to the Prince a handful of dust which he had just gathered in his hand, he added—"But if you wish for relics they are here, for the earth beneath our feet has been watered by the blood of the first martyrs of Jesus Christ."

Nero let loose his fury against the Christians by causing a multitude to perish (some being killed by the sword, others covered with the skins of beasts and devoured by furious dogs, others covered with brimstone and pitch, fastened to stakes, and burned in the evening to give pleasure to their persecutors), and he next desired to strike the shepherd now that he had slaughtered so many of the flock.

For nine months St. Peter and St. Paul had been confined within the terrible dungeons of the Mamertine prison. They were both condemned to death, and on the 29th of June, in the year 66 of the Christian era, St. Paul was beheaded at a place which the piety of the faithful still venerate upon the Ostian way. And St. Peter, his father and friend, after having given him the kiss of farewell, at a spot of which tradition has also preserved the touching remembrance, was led to Nero's garden to be crucified . . .

The Christians elected St. Linus as his successor, and thus commenced the glorious series of Popes which will never end until the end of the world.

The body of St. Peter was taken from the spot by the faithful of Rome ; they laid it in a neighbouring catacomb hollowed out in the sides of Mount Vatican.

There, still more than at the tomb of St. Paul, the Christians met for prayer, for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, and to participate in the mysteries of the Holy Eucharist.

In proportion as the faith spread the richness of the sacred tomb increased. Providence permitted that it should never be violated by the pagans, and that all Christian generations should enjoy the blessing of this inestimable treasure. At the peace of the Church, about the year 320, Constantine the Great desired to honour the memory of the Prince of the Apostles, and raised, at his own expense, a

magnificent church over his tomb. He had a part of Mount Vatican cut away, not daring to disturb the tomb of St. Peter. He surrounded the chest which contained his bones with a shrine of porphyry, and upon the lid he placed a cross of gold, which remains until this day, with the following inscription : TO ST. PETER, CONSTANTINE EMPEROR AND HELENA EMPRESS. DIVO PETRO, CONSTANTINUS AUGUSTUS ET HELENA AUGUSTA.

Nothing but the pavement of this first church still exists. Three hundred and sixty years ago its very antiquity, which rendered it so venerable, caused a complete ruin to be feared. It was decided to rebuild it, and the Pope then raised over the tomb of the Apostle (which was not touched) the immense and marvellous church which the pilgrims of the whole world visit at this day.

Ten thousand bodies of saints and martyrs rest in the crypts of St. Peter's. And in the ranks of this legion, what names ! what memories ! There are the first fifteen Popes, all martyrs. There is St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory of Nazianzum, St. Gregory the Great, St. Leo the Great, St. Leo II., St. Leo III., St. Leo IX. ; there is St. Petronilla, the disciple of St. Peter ; St. Processus and St. Martinian, the two commanders of the cohort which guarded the Apostle in the Mamertine prison, and who now repose with their former captive, afterwards become their father in the faith, in the first temple in the world. In front, on the other side of the tomb, are the Apostles St. Simon and St. Jude, companions of St. Peter, whom death itself has not divided from their former Head.

It is these tombs that constitute to the Christian heart the true beauty of St. Peter's. Tourists and travellers pass them by and see only the marbles, the gold, the mosaics, and the wonders of the architecture. They regard the stones, whilst we regard the saints. They admire the fleeting materials and treasures of earth ; *we* lift our hearts on high, and with the enlightened eyes of the soul see glimpses of the glory which only the light of God can reveal.

What deep and pure emotions must fill the heart of the true Catholic when, approaching this hallowed tomb, before which a hundred and forty lamps burn night and day, he bends his head down to the stone which covers the ashes

of the first Vicar of his God ! How great a privilege to be able to recite on such a spot the ancient symbol of the one true faith, the *Credo*, composed by the holy Apostles, and so often recited by the same St. Peter, who during the days of his apostolate preached and disseminated it throughout the world.

When the pilgrim has ended his prayer and raises his eyes, he suddenly perceives above the tomb of St. Peter, and as though forming the girdle of the gigantic cupola, the sentence which fell from the lips of the Son of God, written upon gold in immense letters of mosaic : "THOU ART PETER, AND UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, AND TO THEE WILL I GIVE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN." "TU ES PETRUS, ET SUPER HANC PETRAM ÆDIFICABO ECCLESIAM MEAM, ET TIBI DABO CLAVES REGNI CÆLORUM."

Then he feels proud of his holy faith, and sees, perhaps for the first time clearly, the utter insignificance of the innumerable religious sects which, scattered here and there, are reaping in endless change and ceaseless discord, the inevitable fruits of abandoning the pastoral See of Peter, and separating themselves from the true fold of Jesus Christ.

The four pillars which sustain the cupola are of such proportions that an architect has been able, by an ingenious thought, to construct, in another part of Rome, a vast chapel and a small monastery in the same space of ground which only one of these pillars occupies. In each of them precious relics are enclosed. In one the body of St. Veronica rests, and the cloth with which she wiped the face of our Lord as He ascended to Mount Calvary. In another is venerated the entire body of St. Longinus, a Roman soldier who, after the Saviour's death, pierced His Sacred Heart with a lance, and a fragment of this lance is preserved in a shrine which is opened on Good Friday, and which is framed in two magnificent columns from the temple of Jerusalem. In the third pillar is preserved a noted relic of the true cross, and in the fourth the head of St. Andrew, the eldest brother of St. Peter.

But what can be said of the feelings of faith and of gratitude which fill the heart of the Christian when, upon the day of grand pontifical ceremonies, he sees the Pope, the successor of St. Peter, the depositary of his power, the heir of his promises, offer to God, over the body of the Apostle,

the sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist, which St. Peter himself celebrated in the Cenaculum upon the Day of Pentecost, and which, for eighteen centuries, all Pontiffs and priests have offered in their turn. It seems as if the most divine spectacle that it has been given to man to contemplate upon earth is the Sacred Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, veiled beneath the Holy Eucharist, and offered to the adoration of the faithful by the hands of the Sovereign Pontiff over the altar of St. Peter. How sad it is that there should be any who could witness this great religious act and yet be incapable of comprehending all its beauty and its glory.

THE DAILY LIFE OF THE POPE.

As a rule the higher the dignity to which a man is raised the more weighty and difficult are the duties which his position involves. I know that this is not generally believed or understood, but it is none the less true. Life is often a weary burden to those of high estate, and there is less liberty in the palaces of princes than in the humble dwellings of the poor.

The greatest dignitary in the world is undoubtedly the Pope, the supreme head of religion upon earth, the High Priest of God, the bishop and pastor of all the faithful, the spiritual father of monarchs as well as of their subjects. There is also no man in the world who leads a more trying, arduous, difficult, and laborious life. From the morning till the evening, from the first day of the year till the last, he is, to the very letter, the *Servant of the servants of God*, as the Sovereign Pontiffs so justly entitle themselves in the Papal bulls and decrees.

Let us consider in what manner the Pope passes the day . . .

Our holy Father, Pope Pius IX., is a tall, handsome, and majestic old man, with a sweet and serious face, and a sonorous sympathetic voice. He lives at Rome, in an immense palace called the Vatican, adjoining the Church of St. Peter's. The vast halls of the Vatican are adorned with grandeur and simplicity; the walls are uniformly covered with red hangings, and with the exception of the pontifical throne, the only seats are wooden stools. After a long suite of rooms occupied by the servants and guards, accord-

ing to their rank, then by the prelates composing the Papal household, we reach the special apartments of His Holiness.

These rooms are small and still more simple than the others. And first comes the study of the Holy Father. It is there that he gives, during the day, his numerous audiences, of which we shall speak presently. The Pope is seated in an arm-chair of crimson velvet; before him is a large square table covered with red silk, similar to the hangings on the walls, and above the chair there is a canopy of the same colour, the insignia of royal and pontifical majesty. Seats for the cardinals and princes, and two or three wooden seats, constitute the furniture of this apartment. This first room communicates with a second of the same size, and exactly similar, excepting that at the end there is a bed hung with crimson silk. This is the Pope's bed-chamber. Then comes a third room furnished in the same manner; this is the dining-room. The Holy Father has every meal alone, on a table covered with red silk like that in the study. Lastly comes the library, which is a large and beautiful room with four or five windows, and where the Pope is accustomed to hold councils with his ministers.

The Pope is always dressed in white. He wears on his head a small cap of white silk, his cassock is of white cloth during the winter, and of thin white woollen or white silk during the summer. His wide band is also of white silk, with gold tassels. His shoes, or slippers, are red, with a gold cross embroidered on the instep. It is this cross which is kissed by every one who approaches the sacred person of the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

When he leaves his apartments the Pope wears over his cassock a rochet of lace, a scarlet mantle trimmed with white fur, and lastly, a stole embroidered in gold. He covers his head with a large red silk hat a little raised on each side, and trimmed with a gold tassel. The custom of the Pontifical Court does not permit him to go out in the streets of Rome excepting in a carriage; beyond the gates of the city he often takes long walks on foot, stopping willingly to speak to the poor and to children, and giving his holy benediction to those whom he meets. All who meet the Pope uncover their heads and kneel down as a mark of the reverence due to his character of Supreme Pontiff. The Holy Father rises early. After his prayers he goes into his chapel to celebrate the Holy Mass. This chapel is

small, and adjoining the Pope's apartment. The Blessed Sacrament is always preserved there, and Pius IX., in his devotion to the Divine Eucharist, attends himself to the two lamps which burn perpetually before the tabernacle. Pius IX. says Mass, slowly and with deep devotion; his august face is often bathed with tears while he holds in his sacred hands the hidden God of whom he is the Vicar. Usually he says Mass at half-past seven, and assists, as an act of thanksgiving, at a second Mass celebrated by one of his chaplains. Afterwards he recites a part of the breviary on his knees with one of the prelates of his household, and then returns to his apartments. The Pope's breakfast consists simply of a cup of black coffee. The sobriety of the Italians is well known, and this is the first repast of almost all Romans. Until about ten o'clock the Holy Father works every day with his first minister, who is a Cardinal, and is called the Secretary of State. It is he who is principally charged with the temporal administration of the States of the Church.

At ten o'clock commence the audiences, a laborious task, which would be trying and wearisome if the most important questions and the gravest interests of religion and society were not there discussed. Cardinals, bishops, princes, ambassadors, missionaries, priests, and great numbers of the faithful come from all parts of the world to lay down at the feet of the Head of the Church their homage, their requests, and their necessities. The Pope remains seated during these audiences. All kneel in his presence, or stand with his permission. Cardinals and princes have the privilege of sitting down. On entering the Pope's study three genuflexions are made; the first at the threshold, the second half way, and the third at the Pope's feet. Then his foot or his hand is kissed, and the audience commences. As soon as it is ended, the Holy Father rings a bell, and some one else is announced and immediately introduced by one of the resident prelates. Only men are admitted in this manner into the apartments of the Pope; this is an invariable rule. Ladies are received for an audience once or twice a week, in a large hall forming part of the public museums of the Vatican.

The audiences of the morning usually last more than four hours. When they are ended, at about half-past two, the Pope passes into his dining-room and takes a frugal

repast. Then he recites, on his knees, the continuation of his breviary, and, after a few minutes' repose, goes out in a carriage, so as to take a little exercise. The Pope often chooses as the destination of his walks some venerable sanctuary where a feast is being celebrated, or some hospital or prison. When it is bad weather the Holy Father contents himself with walking for a little time up and down the library or in one of the covered galleries of the Vatican. At the decline of day, indicated in Italy by the sound of the Angelus, and for this reason called the *Ave Maria*, the Pope returns to the Vatican, recites with his suite the Angelical Salutation, adding the *De Profundis* for all the faithful in the whole world who have died during the course of the day. Then the audiences recommence. Different papers are also submitted to the Pope for his signature; the decrees of the different Roman congregations which preside over the religious affairs of the whole Catholic world are submitted for his sovereign approbation and final decision. These audiences last until ten or eleven in the evening, after which the Holy Father takes a light collation, composed of fruits or vegetables; he then terminates the recitation of his breviary and goes to take some hours of that repose which he has so devoutly and laboriously earned.

Such, with rare exceptions, is the daily life of the Pope, and such a life, notwithstanding the honours with which it is surrounded, and even because of these honours, is a continual subjection, an hourly self-renunciation: also when the Sovereign Pontiff enters into the designs of God, as is so perfectly done by our Holy Father the present Pope, the estimable and saintly Pius IX., his life is complete in the sight of God, and merits more than any other life the great and blessed recompense promised to the faithful servant.

THE PRETENDED SCANDALS OF ROME.

ROME is the very centre and citadel of the Catholic faith, and therefore all the corruptions and abuses which have gradually crept into Catholicism since the first foundation of Christianity, must of necessity be peculiarly rampant at Rome. Such is without exaggeration the opinion of those

who know nothing of our holy faith, viz., of the many who have read no Catholic books, who fail to understand our Catholic services and misapprehend all Catholic doctrines, yet at the same time do not hesitate to form and express their unenlightened opinions based entirely on the ignorant assertions of Protestant writers, or on the foolish and mistaken ideas to which years of enmity and prejudice have given rise. To all these calumnies, built one upon another, I will only oppose one single fact, incontestable to those who are really acquainted with Rome: and that is that at Rome, more than in any other city of the world, Protestants become Catholics. And these Protestants, mark well, are the best, the holiest, and the most learned within the ranks of Protestantism. They are Anglican clergymen, members of the University of Oxford, known throughout England as sincere, intellectual, honourable men; German doctors, whose profound, intricate studies are regarded with admiration by Catholics themselves; deep and earnest thinkers whose good faith is beyond suspicion; members of the different Protestant sects of America, and many others of the same type. Now, I ask, if the very contact with Rome has power to work within such minds as these the most important and difficult change which can take place in the life of a man, how is it possible to explain this phenomenon without recognising that the very atmosphere of Rome, far from giving scandal is, on the contrary, so redolent with Christian truth and Christian holiness that it penetrates the inmost recesses of the heart, sheds light where there was darkness, and fills the soul with God?

There is not a month, there is not a week in which Rome does not witness some abjuration of Protestantism. Some years ago an American minister travelled across the Atlantic expressly to evangelise Rome. The occasion was the best he could have chosen; Pius IX. had just defined the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, and Rome was in the full rush of *idolatry* of *Mariolatry*! Christ was forgotten, but the pure Gospel was now about to shine in the midst of darkness! The honest minister chose, without more delay, a convenient site to build a church where he could preach Christianity to the Romans. The temple rose . . . before it was finished the American became a Catholic, and the temple, completed, became a charming little chapel dedicated to the Immaculate Virgin.

A very similar event happened soon after in the conversion of the anglican clergyman Wilberforce, known to be one of the most brilliant and talented Englishmen of his time. He came to Rome—Protestant, and very Protestant—preached there against Papistry, and a few weeks afterwards humbly abjured all heresy in the church of the Jesuit Fathers.

I have myself known many persons of high rank and deep learning for whom a visit to Rome has procured this same grace—amongst others a young clergyman from Oxford, who came expressly to attack the *errors of Romanism*. “*Tel fut pris, qui croyait prendre.*” This truly good and earnest young minister was astonished to find amongst the Roman clergy of all grades, amongst cardinals and prelates, as well as poor religious, virtues as real and attractive as they were modest and unobtrusive; he discovered a great number of ecclesiastics of deep learning and intact morals all united by ties of perfect harmony. With many of these he had long conversations on the faith they professed, and in the end became a Catholic and finally a priest. I could cite a thousand similar facts, all of which answer, better than any arguments, the calumnious reports to which impiety, heresy, and levity give rise concerning the Pontifical city. I certainly do not pretend that everything is perfect at Rome, that all the ecclesiastics and religious there are saints; it is not well to expect too much, and there, as everywhere, we must make allowance for human weakness. But what I emphatically assert, and of which I am most firmly persuaded, judging by a personal experience of four consecutive years, is that Rome is an edifying city where God is well served, where saintly lives are led, and where the good predominates incalculably over the bad. What I affirm is, that the Roman clergy are, as a body, a most exemplary clergy, as remarkable for their piety and zeal as for their poverty and modesty.

What I affirm and what I assert, judging by my own experience, is that it is impossible to find greater kindness, consideration and courtesy, than amongst the cardinals and prelates of Rome. Nothing could be more edifying than to penetrate into the private life of the greater number of them; they give a great part of their time to prayer, they work most indefatigably and conscientiously, and

their daily sobriety is a real and austere mortification ; the outward pomp which etiquette requires of them is but the covering of simple unostentatious lives, and if towards the end of the day they may be seen walking out like other people and taking a little rest and recreation, can we deny that they have earned it well ?

They are accused of mixing in society. Besides the fact that many of them consecrate all their evenings to work, it must be said in defence of the rest, that Rome, being before all things an ecclesiastical city, both with regard to its temporal as well as its spiritual ascendancy, its cardinals and prelates occupy a rank which devolves upon them certain indispensable duties to *society*. It must also be said that their manner when in society is irreproachable, and that, even in the world, they are distinctly ecclesiastics. Cardinals are the princes of the Church and of Rome. Would to God that all great lords resembled them. I should like to be able to relate a number of instances which would reveal their real characters, and prove all that I have been saying, but a whole book might well be written about Rome.

The little that I have said will, I hope, suffice to show that the capital of the Catholic world has been greatly calumniated ; men attribute to the whole body of the clergy the isolated faults of some few of its members, and blame the Church and the Catholic religion for that which is only the sad result of human infirmity ; they judge in haste, and condemn with passion ; and the world in general repeats all that it hears, and receives as a proved incontestable fact that which is only a mass of falsehoods, a foolish fable, willingly credited and widely disseminated by that unreliable scandal-loving censor, which we call "public opinion."

TWO JUBILEES.

At the opening of the Jubilee of the year 1775, celebrated in the city of Osimo (near Loretto in Italy), a grand procession was organised, in which all the children of the colleges and seminaries took part. The rich silver candlesticks which accompanied the cross were carried by two young clerics of the seminary, about fifteen years old ;

the one named *Della Genga*, the other *Castiglione*, both of noble and illustrious families.

From some cause or another these two acolytes began to quarrel, and carried away by anger went on from words to blows, in a manner that was anything but edifying, especially before so large an assembly. The two champions, having no arms, attacked each other with their candlesticks, and in spite of the promptitude with which they were separated, poor *Della Genga* received a blow which alone would have prevented him from continuing the combat.

Fifty years after, at the Jubilee of 1825, *Della Genga*, become Pope under the ever-revered and celebrated name of *Leo XII.*, descended from the Vatican surrounded by all the Roman court, to preside at the opening of the Jubilee by the ancient ceremony of the demolition of the Holy Gate. The Pope, receiving from the hands of the Cardinal Grand-Penitentiary a silver hammer, strikes the first blow on the wall, which is then pulled down, as has been already explained, and thus gives the signal for the opening of the holy year.

Castiglione, having become a Bishop and a Cardinal, was promoted to the office of Grand Penitentiary of the Roman Church; the honour of presenting the silver hammer of the Jubilee to the Pope therefore came to him of right. On returning it to him, *Leo XII.* said in a low voice and with a mischievous smile :

“*Monsignore il Cardinale*, it is just fifty years ago to-day that, under similar circumstances, you offered me another silver instrument in a somewhat less gracious manner.”

“I remember, Holy Father,” replied the Cardinal a little disconcerted, “and I trust your Holiness pardoned me long ago.”

Four years later, after a reign, alas ! too short, *Leo XII.* died, and Cardinal *Castiglione* succeeded him under the name of *Pius VIII.*

How greatly astonished would have been the witnesses of the procession and stormy encounter of 1775 could they have foreseen the future !

Bad beginnings may make good endings, and we should never despair of anything.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH.

ALL the nations of the earth have not received from heaven the inestimable gift of the one true Faith.

All have not, like the poorest villagers in a Catholic country, a priest to receive and baptize their new-born children, to teach them to know God and to know themselves,—a kind and sympathising pastor to comfort them in trouble and sickness, to help and console them at the terrible moment of death, and to pray for them when they are no more. Out of the immense number of men living on the earth, many hundreds of millions are still deprived of these the greatest of all benefits.

Therefore in Pagan countries the most terrible crimes dishonour humanity, so terrible that we are almost tempted to ask if those who act thus can be men and not rather monsters in human form. Thus in China, a country so celebrated for its riches, its arts, its civilisation, hundreds of thousands of children are destroyed every year by the most horrible and unnatural means. In Africa, in Oceania, in Central America, there are thousands of tribes among whom cannibalism is the practice, and who follow up each conquest by feasting on their vanquished enemy. Such is the extent of degradation amongst these miserable people that when the father is old and infirm, the son massacres and eats him without even the victim himself feeling any surprise. In India, the cradle of civilisation, upon the death of certain chiefs, they immolate and burn their wives and their slaves, sometimes to the number of many hundreds. Lastly, everywhere where the Gospel is not preached and practised; everywhere where Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Restorer of fallen humanity, is not adored, there are the most frightful disorders, the most foolish superstitions, subjection of women, oppression of the poor, the most revolting immorality, and very often unmingled wretchedness.

Nevertheless, Jesus Christ is the Saviour of *all* men. In His Divine love He makes no distinction between the European and the Asiatic, between the African Negro and the American Indian. He desires to save them all, to lead them all to the possession of eternal life, and for this end He has put into the hearts of His servants, from the com-

mencement of Christianity, the desire to proclaim His holy name throughout the world. "Go," He said to them when ascending into heaven, "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," and from that very moment the propagation of the Faith began. Every one knows the wonderful labours of the apostles; and here we might well speak of those amongst the saints who, for eighteen centuries, have followed in their steps; but it will suffice to say that what was done by St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Thomas, and all the Apostles, the Church still does through her missionaries, whom she sends all over the earth to preach the Gospel to every creature.

Therefore, year by year from the shores of France, of England, of Italy, of Belgium, intrepid missionary priests go forth into all known lands, and even into those which are still unexplored, to evangelise the nations.

Many of these fall victims upon their first arrival to hunger, cholera, and pestilence; others become the object of the most cruel persecutions. They are thrown into prison, beaten with rods, torn with pincers, strangled, burned, cut in pieces; even those who escape such tortures as these are subject to the greatest misery, and are more destitute than the very poorest of the poor in Europe. And, nevertheless, year after year there are never wanting rich and talented men who are willing to renounce a brilliant and successful career in their own country, to give up fortune and family and friends, and to go forth to fill the voids which epidemics and the hands of savage persecutors have made; for, before all, they desire to save their brethren who groan in misery and sin, and do not know the one true God!

And this is the *Propagation of the Faith*.

It is a generous work; for, whilst the missionaries only ask the faithful for a small contribution every week, and one Ave Maria every day, they are themselves prodigal of their life and their blood. It is a French work; since it was France that gave, thirty years ago, the signal for that association which now covers the whole world. It is a work which is supremely acceptable to God, because it is the continuation of the work of Jesus Christ upon earth. There is, therefore, no Christian who should not belong to this association, especially now that the Sovereign Pontiff has rendered it accessible to the poorest, by allowing those

to be inscribed in it who, though only able to give the smallest possible alms, should make some little offering to the collectors every month, according as their conscience and their means permit.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY INFANCY.

SOME years ago a great undertaking was conceived by a French Bishop, Mgr. de Forbin-Janson.

Deeply grieved by the thought of the multitude of children who in idolatrous countries perish through infanticide, he resolved to snatch them from the cruel death which awaited them, to open heaven, by baptism, to the greatest number, and to make the others, by a Christian education, the instruments of the propagation of the Gospel in their own country.

This was a generous thought, and worthy of the good Bishop who resolved to put it into execution.

There are, in fact, countries unenlightened by that Gospel of peace and love which shows to us JESUS caressing and blessing little children; and where there exists, on the contrary, a profound contempt for childhood; there little children are exposed and sold like some vile merchandise, and are killed if they are a trouble and inconvenience—and in this respect China is lamentably conspicuous for its barbarity. In this vast country, where the cruelty of barbarism is united to the immorality of an effete civilisation, custom gives the head of the family the right to murder his new-born child, and the poor, innumerable in this empire, take advantage of this terrible right in order to free themselves from the inconvenience of a numerous family.

The following is the testimony of an English writer upon this subject:—

“There the wise-women,” he says, “stifle the children in a basin of hot water, and are paid for this execution. There they throw them into the river after having bound to their backs an empty gourd so that they should float a long time before expiring; the screams they utter then would make human nature shudder in any other land; but there they are accustomed to hear them and nobody shudders. The third method of destroying them is to expose them in

the streets, especially at Peking, where carts pass every morning and collect these children thus exposed during the night and cast them into a grave, where they are left without being covered with earth, in the hope that the Mahometans may come and take some of them out. But very often, before these carts arrive, the dogs, and especially the pigs which fill the streets of the cities of China, eat the children alive. In the city of Peking alone we are assured that in three years 9702 children were thus cast upon the highway, and this without counting those who had been trampled to death by horses or mules, nor those devoured by dogs, nor those stifled at their birth, nor those carried away by the Mahometans, nor those cast into the water, calculated by different writers to amount to the number of twelve thousand every year for the city of Peking alone."

These facts are confirmed by the recent witness of our missionaries.

"Hundreds of thousands, they say, are thus destroyed. The Chinese Government puts no obstacle to this terrible custom. All our missionaries are occupied in receiving these poor little creatures. They bring them to them often for six shillings, three shillings, and even for nothing, saying that if they do not accept them they will have to die."

Who would not be touched by such sad accounts as these. Every one who hears them must feel deep compassion for these poor children, and must be anxious to save them by any possible means. . . . It was this thought that filled the mind of the venerable Bishop of Nancy; this is the work of the Holy Infancy.

In all these idolatrous countries, the most populous of Asia, China, Siam, Cochin-China and Tonquin; there, where money is scarce, and a man can live upon about a penny or twopence a day, nothing but money is required, and often very little money, to save a great number of children; since according to the calculation of the missionaries, each one of the associates, by the small contribution of sixpence a year, can save a child. Could any one refuse so small a sum for such an object? The organisation of the work is almost the same as that of the Propagation of the Faith. The associates are divided into a series of twelve members, to honour the twelve years of the Divine Childhood of our Lord. The subscription for each member is a halfpenny a month (sixpence a year). Each member recites every day

(or if he is too young somebody may recite for him) : 1st, One *Ave Maria*; 2d, the following invocation, *Holy Virgin Mary, pray for us and for the poor little heathen children*. And as a spiritual bond between these youthful benefactors, and those whom the work endeavours to save, the baptismal names given to the heathen children are chosen as much as possible from the names of their young protectors. Lastly, the subscribers undertake to enrol themselves, as soon as they are older, in the work of the Propagation of the Faith, which every year sends such intrepid missionaries into all heathen lands.

People sometimes say : "Why should we trouble about the little Chinese? Have we no abandoned and destitute children at home for whom we ought, first of all, to provide?" The answer to this question is a very simple one. Yes, doubtless, before we go many thousands of miles to save the child who is forsaken, let us take to our hearts the little one lying without our door. This is the first duty; this is the truest instinct. But when this duty is fulfilled.—and thanks be to God! in Christian countries home-missions are never wanting for charitable aid,—let us remember that the hundreds of thousands of children who perish every year in these idolatrous lands are our brethren, and have souls like ours; and let us seek to save them. And here we would gladly plead this cause in such words as were spoken by St. Vincent de Paul, when he determined by his eloquence the foundation of the first establishment for forsaken children.

"Behold them, yes, behold them, these poor little children of whom we ask you to become the mothers! See them, in spite of the distance, stretching their little suppliant hands towards you, asking you, not only for life on earth, but more than all, for baptism. . . . They will die if you abandon them, and will be deprived for ever of the sight of God. . . . They will die by hundreds of thousands, stifled, drowned, crushed, devoured alive by dogs and swine! . . . But if you adopt them, they will survive, and will be *living monuments* of your charity, growing as your children grow, and never ceasing to draw down upon them and upon you fresh graces by their prayers; or even, dying still, and doubtless in great numbers, but covered with the Precious Blood and the merits of Jesus Christ, Heaven itself will gather for you and

for your children this rich harvest of little angels. They will watch over you, over all that is dearest to you, returning to mingle in your greatest feast days, in the festivals of your children ; and at life's last day they will encourage you, and will strengthen you, and will come at last to introduce you into your one true home, and there, there, where perfect happiness extinguishes all desires, your own will be increased by the felicity which you will see them eternally enjoy."

THE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION OF ST. FRANCIS OF SALES.

AMONGST the general works devoted to the sacred interests of the Church, there are certainly few which are more urgent than the Association of St. Francis of Sales, founded in 1857, by the express desire of our Holy Father Pope Pius IX., and called by him "*The Propagation of the Faith Within.*"

Its object is to excite, in the Christian countries of Europe, the zeal of Catholics, and to unite them to their pastors in a holy league of prayer and alms, in order to provide efficacious means to preserve, maintain, and defend the faith of the children of the Church.

In countries of mixed creeds where the Protestant propaganda is supported by foreign resources, the object of the association is to counteract all influences hostile to the one true Faith by diffusing Catholic books, by helping the parish priest to have missions given, and by supporting and extending Catholic schools and orphanages.

In dioceses where there is no heretical propaganda the object of the association is to sustain and encourage the parish priest in a still more painful struggle—the struggle against religious indifference and forgetfulness of God. It tries to form around them a nucleus of fervent Christians, whose good example may influence others ; and there also, in order to dissipate ignorance and prejudice, to arouse from apathy, to reanimate faith, and to lead the erring back to the Sacraments, it aids the priest to found Christian schools, to invite missionaries to distribute good and simple books, to maintain or even to establish in his little church frequent religious services ; in a word, to preserve and to reanimate the spirit of religion around him.

Lastly, in dioceses where, thanks to Heaven, the Faith is still living and the Church is honoured, the work of St. Francis of Sales asks from priests and faithful Catholics alms for their less happy brethren ; she asks them to come to the aid of those who are exposed to the danger of losing the Faith, and to do for populations at home, whose salvation should be most dear to them, that which they do so generously to propagate the same Faith in heathen countries, and to save the poor little children of China and India. What could be more natural and at the same time more Catholic than this association.

This work, which may be summed up in two words, PRESERVATION and DEFENCE OF THE FAITH, has rapidly developed and is visibly blessed by God. It recommends itself by powerful claims to the sympathy and the support of priests and of all good Catholics, both rich and poor.

THE LITTLE SAVOYARDS.

THERE are about three hundred poor little chimney sweeps, from the age of seven or eight up to about fourteen or fifteen years old, who come from the mountains of Auvergne or of Savoy to gain their living at Paris. Of all the inhabitants of the great city there are perhaps none so destitute and suffering as they, and yet experience shows us every day that they are neither the most wicked nor the most vicious. Beneath the blackness which covers both face and body there are often innocent little souls, childlike and full of candour. Some young Christian people have been touched by the utter destitution to which they see these poor little chimney sweeps reduced, and without any other resources than their own charity they have set to work to release them from the twofold misery of soul and body.

Their success has gone beyond their hopes. They have seen coming to them from all parts these poor children who, in their dirt and wretchedness, knew not where to go to learn to pray to God, to prepare to make their First Communion, and to find help and sympathy.

With truly Christian devotion, these young men, aided by two good priests of the Church of St. Etienne du Mont, at Paris, have divided amongst themselves the evenings of every day of the year. They consecrate two hours *every day* to instruct their little protégés, to teach them to know

God, to love Him with their whole hearts, and to serve Him faithfully. From time to time they give rewards to the best disposed, doubtless very trifling, but of great worth to the chimney sweeps, so true it is that everything in this world has a relative value. When the children are sick they visit them, mount up to their poor garrets and fill the father's and the mother's place.

The great feast day of this little society is the day of the First Communion. Upon that day all are good, and every thing is beautiful. The little sweepers are swept, in their turn, both as regards the soul and body. Like unto our Divine Lord who in love humiliated Himself to wash the feet of His Apostles, these true Christians overcome their repugnance, and themselves wash, or rather scrub, comb and brush these unfortunate children who have been neither washed nor combed, perhaps, since they left their native country. After this toilet it is often difficult to recognise them except by the sound of the voice. Their black clothes are put on one side to be washed and cleaned, and each chimney sweep is dressed in a complete costume of dark-blue velvet, such as is worn in Savoy; a white shirt, stockings, shoes, necktie, cap, nothing is wanting.

The next morning all, masters and pupils, fathers and children, go to the Church of St. Etienne du Mont, where the parish priest joins in the feast, and surrounds this humble First Communion with all the solemnity of Catholic worship. After the chimney sweeps, the catechists approach in their turn to the holy altar and receive from God Himself their anticipated recompense. After the ceremony the children are taken to the house of some generous person, or to some religious community, and they breakfast, play, and pass in perfect joy that day—which is the greatest and the happiest of their life.

See how great things Christians may do with faith and love, with scarcely any material resources. For although a little money is wanted for all good works, it is not upon the money, but upon the charity, that they depend.

We shall conclude this short notice with a touching little incident which happened upon this occasion. To one of the assemblies met to discuss the possibility of taking a house in which board and lodging might be provided for the most destitute children, there came a lady much interested in the work, bringing with her her little boy, Odon

de V——, aged ten or eleven years. This good little child was so touched by what he heard and saw, that he wrote the following letter to the director of the work, sending him forty francs as alms :—

“Paris, January 28.

“MONSIEUR,—I have sent you some money to make a bed for your little chimney sweeps in the new house of which you told us on Sunday, for I think you are going to do all you can to have it, and to continue to do good to these poor little children. How they seemed to be enjoying their *brioche*s on Sunday ! How happy they seemed !

“As I had not much money in my purse I made a little bargain with papa ; I gave him my word of honour to do my best every week from now till Easter to deserve the mark for good conduct at the school I go to, and papa was so good as to advance me at once enough to pay for a bed for a little chimney sweep. But now I must keep my word ; and to do that, I have need of grace from God, and I think it would help me very much if my friends the poor little chimney sweeps would pray a little for me.

“Ask them, I entreat you, monsieur, you who are their good father, to pray a little for Odon de V——, who will be very grateful to you.”

FENELON AND POOR PIERROT.

DOUBTLESS you know the name of Fénelon, the holy and learned Archbishop of Cambray. The following is the history of his first sermon.

Two hundred years ago, in the time of Fénelon, it was the custom of young people destined to the ecclesiastical state to endeavour to speak in public by means of certain oratorical exercises ; and for this purpose brilliant assemblies often met in the largest hotels of Paris to listen to the young aspirants. Fénelon was fifteen and already wore the dress of an ecclesiastic. He was moreover remarkable for his holiness, his grace, and his modesty, he was diligent and intellectual, but above all, most charitable to the poor. His father, the Marquis of Fénelon, chose the Hotel de Boufflers for the début of his young abbé, feeling assured that it would be a remarkable success. Consequently the day was fixed, notwithstanding the resistance of the retir-

ing Fénelon, and the most brilliant company was invited to form the auditory. All the great lords and ladies of the court of Louis XIV. had taken their places in the grand salon prepared for this purpose, and were astonished to find that the young preacher did not appear. His father, vexed at a delay which he could not understand, tried to make excuses for the young abbé to Madame Boufflers and the principal personages in the assembly, but at last Fénelon himself entered the room and, his face a little flushed with the diffidence natural to his youth and his retiring disposition, sat down at the table prepared for him.

"Messieurs et Mesdames," he said, "I ask your pardon for having kept so illustrious an audience waiting, but had it been necessary to keep you an hour longer, and had the king himself been present here, I should not have hesitated to do so. On arriving at the Hotel de Boufflers, I perceived at an angle of the house a poor little Savoyard lying on the ground and half covered by the thick flakes of snow which were falling. Touched and surprised at this sight I stopped and approached the unfortunate child. 'What are you doing here, my child?' I said to him. He burst into tears, and without answering my question he murmured these despairing words :

"I would I were dead !"

"Dead, my poor child ! Then you are very miserable ? You have no one who loves you ?"

"Ah yes, my good Monsieur, I am very miserable," cried the child. "I am lost ! I cannot return home to my mother ; I have nothing to do but die !"

"I asked his name, his age, and the cause of his grief ; and he told his story in these words :

"My name is Pierrot, I am twelve years old. I am a Savoyard, and I left my home and my mother five years ago. I have worked as hard as I could at sweeping chimneys, and I saved my money so as to be able to return to my country as soon as possible, and take my little hoard to my dear mother. I put by every halfpenny, every farthing, and at last I had three hundred and fifteen pounds hidden under a brick in a garret where I sleep. Very light-hearted, I was getting ready to set out with two relations who are returning to Savoy ; and this morning when I lifted my brick to take out my treasure and put it in a bag to carry with me, I found the place empty. . . .

it had all been stolen. Now I dare not return to my country. They would say I had been a wicked boy and had forgotten my parents. I can do nothing now but die, for I am too miserable.'

"Such is, in a few words," continued Fénelon, "the story told me by the poor little Pierrot, who could scarcely speak for sobbing and for the bitter cold. . . . I took him up in my arms and carried him to this hotel, where I confided him to the care of the landlord. Since Providence put in my way this opportunity of doing good I could not let it pass; and since this poor little one of Jesus Christ has a momentary asylum in the very hotel where you have met together to listen to me, I feel bound to ask you to co-operate in this good work, and I therefore preferred to speak to you of the poor Savoyard, instead of giving the discourse you expected from me. I ask you now in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of the poor, and the consoler of the afflicted to give your alms for my little protégé, whose fate thus rests in your hands. A piece of silver or gold is little for you, but for this poor child it is much—it is joy, and life, and happiness. Give, and God Himself will restore it to you."

During this improvised sermon, all the more touching for its simplicity, many eyes were full of tears, which another discourse would have failed to call forth. The young abbé, much moved himself, and a little confused, it must be confessed, at his own temerity, prepared to make the collection for poor Pierrot, when the child, led by the Marquise de Boufflers, who had sent for him, was introduced into the midst of this noble and brilliant assemblage.

The sight of the poor boy, whose sweet and innocent face expressed both grief and astonishment, reanimated the kindly feelings which Fénelon's recital had aroused in all who heard him. They questioned the child, and in his original patois he related anew the details which we have just given. Madame de Boufflers in her turn pleaded his cause with much earnestness and enthusiasm, and declared that she would herself make the collection in the brown cap of the little Savoyard.

"But I warn you before commencing," she said, "that I receive nothing but gold." Not having any herself she unfastened one of her earrings and gave it as her own offering. Louis fell like hail into the old cap which had never

served such a purpose before. The collection amounted to more than two thousand pounds. The child thought he was dreaming, and could not believe that all this gold was for him. As soon as he was convinced of it he began dancing, and crying, and laughing, forgetting all the people who surrounded him, and thinking only of his mother. The Marquise de Boufflers, having affectionately thanked Fénelon in the name of all present for the pleasure he had given them that evening, kept the little Savoyard for some days at her hotel, where he was cared for by her orders. She clothed him from head to foot, gave him beautiful presents for his father and mother, his brothers and sisters, paid the expenses of his journey, and making up the sum to three thousand pounds, charged herself to see that it reached the mother of the child in safety.

Such was Fénelon's first sermon. In the course of years when he had become a priest and Archbishop of Cambrai, it is possible that he may have preached sermons quite as good, but I am very sure that he never preached a better.

A SOUVENIR.

IN the year 1841 I was at Paris and taking part in the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul.

Some of the young people who composed it had the habit of visiting the sick in the hospital once or twice a week.

The Hospital Necker, in the Rue de Sèvres, had fallen to my share. I always commenced my visits with the chapel, going there to ask God to bless the work which for love of Him I was about to accomplish, and to accompany the words and counsel I was going to give to my sick people with His benediction; and then, when I had finished my visit to the wards I returned to lay the fruits at the sacred feet of our Divine Master.

I was obliged to leave Paris in the spring, but I always remember one touching incident of which I was the witness upon my last visit to the sick of Necker. The ward I had to visit that day was entrusted to the care of a sister of charity who had grown old in this holy ministry, and who was no less indefatigable in allaying the sufferings of her patients than she was zealous for the salvation of their

souls. On arriving I went, according to my custom, to receive the orders of this good sister. She especially recommended to me six or seven sick people: one newly arrived, and still unknown to her; another in a dying state, and needing to be strengthened and comforted; another already moved to repentance, and on the point of conversion, &c.

"And then," she added, "go to No. 39; you will find there a man of thirty-two or thirty-three years of age in the last stage of consumption, and who cannot live more than two or three days. I have tried in vain to get him to listen to me or speak to me, but he has driven me away from him three or four times, and has only received the chaplain with rough, ungracious words. One of your confrères of St. Vincent de Paul has visited him many times with no better success. He will probably receive you in the same way, but no trouble must be spared. We must only consider the glory of God, and the poor soul to be saved."

"Well, my good sister," I replied, "if he dismisses me, why, then, I shall be dismissed, that is all; I shall be none the worse for that. But say a Hail Mary for the poor man whilst I go and speak to him."

I went my rounds, and going from bed to bed, I arrived at No. 39. It gave me quite a shock when I first caught sight of him. Death was written indelibly on his face. He was propped up on the pillows of his bed. His sallow face was ghastly in its pallor, and his emaciated countenance and sunken eyes gave his dark eyes a strange wild look. I approached his bed. He fixed his eyes on me without speaking.

"The sister has told me, my poor friend, that you are suffering much, and that you have been ill for a long time," I said to him.

No answer, but the expression of the man's face grew harder and harder, as though he would say: "I want none of your condolences; leave me in peace."

I appeared not to perceive this. "Are you suffering much just now, is there anything I can do for you?" I asked.

No answer.

"But you must try to make a virtue of necessity, my poor friend, and offer your sufferings to God as an expiation of your sins; thus at least they will be of profit to you."

Still the same silence, and the same reception. The situation grew embarrassing. The expression of the sick man became more and more menacing, and I expected every moment that he would give some insulting reply. But suddenly Divine Providence sent me an inspiration. I went close up to him, and bending down, I said in a whisper, "Did you make a good first Communion?"

These words had the effect of an electric shock. He made a slight movement, the expression of his face changed, and he murmured rather than said :

"Yes, monsieur."

"And were you not happy at that time?"

"Yes, monsieur," he answered with emotion, and I could see that his eyes had filled with tears.

Then I took his hands in mine. "And why were you happy then, if not because you were pure and chaste, loving and fearing God, living a Christian life? But this happiness may be yours again, God is as merciful as then, He has not changed!"

He was still weeping.

"I am sure you would be glad to make your confession?"

"Yes, monsieur," he said with an effort, and held out his arms to embrace me.

You may imagine how gladly I responded; then I gave him a little advice to help him in the carrying out of his good resolution. After that I left him, and announced to the sister the unexpected success of my visit. I do not know what followed; but that which remains deeply engraven on my mind, or rather on my heart, is the marvellous power of the mercy of God, which could change a heart so hardened in an instant by the help of a single word! The remembrance of his first Communion alone sufficed to convert and probably to save this poor dying man. Happy for him that he had made it well; for if he had negligently fulfilled this great act of the Christian life, the remembrance that I recalled to him would have doubtless made upon his heart a very faint impression. Thus good produces good, and with God nothing is lost.

I would impress this upon the young who are entering upon life, and upon parents who are charged to watch over them, and to implant in their young souls those salutary impressions which shall be, perhaps, one day the means of their salvation.

MARTYRDOM OF THE SOLDIERS PROCESSUS
AND MARTINIAN.

ONE of the most venerated sanctuaries of Rome, and one which fills the heart of the Christian with deep and almost painful emotions, is undoubtedly the *Mamertine Prison*, close to the Forum. It was there that the two great Apostles of the Faith, St. Peter and St. Paul, were imprisoned for nine months by the order of the cruel Nero, Emperor of Rome. It was from there that they set forth to receive with death the crown of martyrdom after having had the happiness to convert and to baptize their two keepers, Processus and Martinian, and the forty-seven soldiers appointed by the Senate as their guard.

Before relating the sublime drama, by the memory of which this place is hallowed, a few words must be said about the place itself.

The prison consists of two subterranean stories of a circular form, hollowed out of the living rock. The unfortunate prisoners condemned to death were let down into the first cavern through a circular hole about three feet in diameter cut out in the middle of the vault; from there they were again let down with ropes through a similar opening into the second cavern, which was beneath the first. There Jugurtha, that terrible enemy of Rome, taken prisoner in Africa, died of cold and hunger. Zentulus, Cethegus, and the other accomplices of Catilina, who attempted to overthrow the Senate in the time of Nero, were thrown into this prison and massacred. The upper prison, at the time of the imprisonment of the holy Apostles, was occupied by the keepers and the Roman soldiers; and a staircase had then been constructed which led down to the Roman prison reserved for the Apostles themselves.

It was in this terrible dungeon, deprived of light and of fresh air, scarcely six feet high and about fifteen in length, that during nine months the two great saints lived an almost miraculous life, chained to a broken column. We may see to-day this sacred column and the two rings into which the chain was fastened; and I leave you to judge of the feelings which the sight inspires. We may also see the fountain which, at the word of St. Peter, sprung forth miraculously from the rock itself without any opening or

any fissure appearing to offer any passage to the water, which, nevertheless, has not ceased to spring from the soil. It was in this fountain that the Apostles baptized their keepers and the Roman soldiers whom they had the glory and joy to convert to the Christian faith, thus resembling their Divine Master, who from the cross, in the midst of His last sufferings and of the cruel ignominy to which He was subjected by the Jews, converted the thief crucified at His side and the Roman officer of the guard, only by the sight of His resignation and His divine love for men.

Processus and Martinian, when receiving baptism and embracing Christianity, were not ignorant that their holy temerity would soon be rewarded—by Nero, with death; by God, with the palm of martyrdom. The frightful tortures inflicted by the cruel tyrant upon the thousands of Christians who had already watered with their blood every circus of Rome, the sight of the treatment endured by the two illustrious prisoners under their keeping, and the grave warnings given them by the Apostles themselves when administering the sacrament of baptism, could not leave them in doubt as to the fate which awaited them. But faith, says the Scripture, removes mountains: it welcomes death and suffering, and even invests them with a beauty and attraction which causes them to be received with joy and eagerness.

When the magistrate named Paulinus, to whom Nero had confided the care of Peter and of Paul, and who had in his turn confided them to Processus and Martinian, heard of their conversion, he caused them to be arrested and brought before him. They then commenced to give thanks to God who had conferred on them the grace of confessing the faith.

“What are you?” demanded Paulinus.

“We are Christians,” they said, “and confess the faith of JESUS CHRIST.”

“Sacrifice to the gods; return to our friendship, and Cæsar will load you with honour.”

“Peace with thy gods! Sacrifice with us to the Lord Jesus Christ, so as to escape the torments and eternal flames of hell.”

Paulinus, irritated by their holy constancy, commanded that their mouth and teeth should be broken with stones; but they, in the midst of groans drawn from their lips by

pain, celebrated the glory of God, and said : "No, we will not sacrifice to thy gods, who are only demons ; we are Christians ; the Christ is the Son of God !"

A tripod was then brought upon which was a little statue of Jupiter. Paulinus commanded them to burn incense before the idol and to deny Jesus Christ. But they began to laugh, and spit upon this divinity of metal, repeating, "We are Christians !"

Inflamed with anger, Paulinus had them fastened to the rack, the instrument chosen for their suffering ; their persecutors dislocated their limbs with cords, and struck them with whips. "Deny your CHRIST," cried the judge, "and you shall be delivered." But even whilst their bones were being broken, they replied : "We are Christians ! We will never deny the God who has been crucified, crowned with thorns, pierced with nails, and has died for us !"

During this time a noble Roman lady named Lucina encouraged them with these words : "Persevere, soldiers of Christ ; fear not the suffering which will lead you to heaven." Being unfastened from the rack, they were stretched upon it a second time, and their bodies torn with rods armed with iron points. They carried them half dead to their prison, where Lucina came to minister to them. In the meantime the magistrate Paulinus was struck with sudden death. At this news Nero commanded the two martyrs to be sacrificed immediately. Taken from their dungeon they were led out of Rome and beheaded. Lucina received their bodies, embalmed them, and buried them in the Catacombs.

When the time arrived in which the Christian faith could emerge from her mysterious hiding-place, and when the worship of Christ had become that of the Roman emperors and could come forth into the sunlight, when the Rome of the Catacombs was to dethrone the Rome of the Cæsars and plant the cross upon the ruins of their palaces, the bodies of innumerable martyrs, whom the piety of the faithful had rescued from profanation, were withdrawn from their subterranean retreat and received the public veneration of Christians. Amongst the temples which rose on all sides, one of the first, as was just, was consecrated to the two great Apostles, martyrs and founders of the Church, and received their precious relics. But in the Basilica of St.

Peter their bodies are not isolated. A touching thought of the Sovereign Pontiffs has been to unite in one common veneration those who had been united in one common martyrdom. They desired that the two bodies of Processus and Martinian should keep watch as it were over those of St. Peter and St. Paul, since it had been their mission to keep watch over them during the last days of their life.

The Christian, prostrate before the tomb of the two Apostles beneath the dome of St. Peter's, sees on his right an altar which covers the relics of their two keepers. St. Processus and St. Martinian are there to render witness to their teachers, and to the miracles which God accomplished by their hands. The sons have not been separated from their fathers ; the keepers have not left their prisoners.

THE MARTYR GERONIMO.

ON the 27th of December 1852, some artillerymen on demolishing the fort of the *Vingt-Quatre-Heures*, at Algiers, remarked an excavation in which they perceived human bones. The skeleton had preserved its position ; the arms were crossed behind the back, and a cord which had served to tie the hands, had adhered to the mortar.

They recognised, without difficulty, the sacred relics of a martyr of the sixteenth century, named Geronimo, who they knew had been buried at this place, and for whom they had sought in vain for many years. The history of this martyr is very edifying ; it is related by the most authentic documents as follows :—

Geronimo was an Arab by birth. The Spaniards, then masters of the town of Oran, exposed him in a slave market whilst quite a child. A good priest bought him, instructed him in the Catholic Faith, baptized him, and gave him his name of Geronimo.

At the age of eight years the boy was seized by the Arabs, and either consented or was forced to become once more a Mahometan. But he did not lose the remembrance of the Christian religion, and when about twenty-five years old, being no longer able to resist the voice of truth ever urging him to return to her, he went back to Oran, abjured Islamism, married a Christian, and lived many years in the practice of Christian virtues and of the Catholic

Faith. But Providence had destined him to seal with his blood the faith which he had voluntarily embraced, and which he practised with a fervour that gave him a high place amongst the elect.

In the month of May 1569, Geronimo, going for an excursion on the sea with nine companions, was surprised by some Arab pirates, who made them all prisoners and took them to Algiers, where they were sold as slaves. Algiers was then in the possession of the Arabs, and Ali Pacha, who governed the city, became the owner of Geronimo. It soon came to his knowledge that his slave was an Arab by birth, and that he had become a Catholic; and he used every means, menaces, punishments, and promises to induce him to apostatise. But Geronimo preferred his holy faith to the liberty and the riches that were promised him; and to every inducement and to every threat he answered nothing but these words, "I am a Christian."

Ali Pacha, furious at what he called his obstinacy, resolved to take a terrible vengeance. He had ordered a fort to be constructed, now called the fort of the "Twenty-four hours," and he often visited the works himself.

One day when he was examining the manœuvres which crushed the earth in the great chests which serve for the construction of blocks of clay, a diabolical thought suddenly suggested itself to his mind.

He called *Michel de Navarre*, his master mason, and showing him a chest just prepared, but which had not yet been filled with earth, he said to him: "Leave that chest empty until to-morrow, for I intend to make clay with the body of that dog of Oran who refuses to return to the religion of Mahomet." After these words, Ali Pacha returned to Dar-Soulthan, now called Djenina, and which was then the palace of the governors of Algiers.

The end of the day approached; Michel, after having prepared the chest, assembled his workmen, and returned with them to the prison. He went immediately to find Geronimo, and told him what had just passed, exhorting him to resignation.

"Blessed be God for all things!" cried the future martyr; "let not these infidels imagine that they will frighten me with the horrible suffering they have invented, and cause me to renounce the true religion from fear.

All that I ask of God is that He will have pity on my soul and pardon my sins."

From that moment Geronimo prepared himself for the glorious witness which he was to render the following day. There was a chapel in the prison, and also a priest amongst the slaves. Geronimo confessed, received communion and extreme unction, and passed the night in prayer.

On the 18th of September 1569 four *chaouchs* of Ali Pacha came early to the prison and asked for Geronimo, who, on hearing them, came forth from the chapel where he was still praying.

"Dog, Jew, traitor, why will you not become once more a Mussulman?" they shouted in chorus as soon as they perceived him.

The holy slave answered not a word, but gave himself into their hands. He arrived at the fort in their company, Ali Pacha and a great number of Turks, renegades, and Moors, being already assembled there, and thirsting for Christian blood.

"Hold! dog," cried Ali, "wilt thou not return to the religion of Mahomet?"

"For nothing in the world," replied Geronimo; "I am a Christian, and a Christian I will remain."

"Enough!" cried the exasperated Pacha; "thou seest that chest, in that thou shalt first be crushed, then buried alive."

"Do what thou wilt," replied the martyr of God courageously, "I am prepared for everything, and nothing in the world will make me abandon the faith of my Lord Jesus Christ."

Ali Pacha, seeing clearly that nothing would overcome his resolution, commanded that his chains should be taken off, and that his hands and feet should be bound. In this state he was seized by the four *chaouchs*, who threw him to the bottom of the chest.

We see, upon this occasion, that the most cruel amongst those ferocious men were not those who were born in the country. A Spaniard, named Tamango, who had become a Mussulman under the name of Djafar, jumped into the chest upon Geronimo, took up one of the pestles, and demanded that earth should be brought to him instantly, which was done. This miserable man then commenced to strike violently on the poor martyr, who never uttered a

cry, or allowed a single murmur to escape from his lips. Other renegades, wishing to appear as good Mussulmans as Tamango, seized the pestles in their turn, and ended by stifling Geronimo under the clay.

The chest was then filled to the top ; the martyr reposed for three centuries in his glorious tomb.

All these tigers, satiated by the sight of this terrible suffering, returned gaily to Algiers in the suite of Ali Pacha, who repeated more than once upon the way : "I could not have believed that this Christian would have endured death with so much courage."

Such is the history of the death of the martyr Geronimo. It is thus that Christians know how to die ; it is thus that they prefer agony and death to the shame and crime of apostacy, knowing that God will reward them in heaven by eternal and infinite felicity for those sufferings which they have borne on earth for the love and glory of His holy name.

THE LAST MOMENTS AND DEATH OF SAINT CHARLES BORROMÉO.

SAINT CHARLES BORROMÉO is one of the greatest men who have ever lived. Born in Italy in 1538, he belonged to one of the most powerful and celebrated families of Milan. A tender piety preserved his childhood from the faults which are usual at this thoughtless age, and as his holiness constantly increased, the forty-six years which he lived in this world were passed in innocence, unsullied by a single grievous sin. Called to the service of God and to the ministry of the holy altar, he embraced the ecclesiastical state very early in life ; and his uncle having been raised to the dignity of the Sovereign Pontificate, under the name of Pius IV., St. Charles, whilst still young, found himself elevated, by no wish of his own, to the most brilliant offices of the Roman Church. At twenty-three he was a Cardinal, and was distinguished in the ranks of the Sacred College by his fervent piety, his love of justice, his zeal for the sanctification of souls, his inexhaustible tenderness for the unfortunate, his prudence, and his energy.

Appointed Archbishop of Milan, he left Rome, in spite of the entreaties of his uncle, and during the twenty-three

years that his Episcopate lasted, he consecrated himself wholly to the salvation of the souls of those who constituted his immense flock. He never counted the cost when any opportunity offered of doing good. A fortune of more than five hundred thousand a year was spent in good works, in useful Christian foundations, and in alms. Once this great Bishop was known to give away seventeen thousand two hundred pounds in a single day.

We cannot here relate the details of this admirable life. Written by his secretary, who was an eyewitness of the facts which he relates, it was sufficient to effect the conversion of a Protestant minister into whose hands it fell by chance. This minister relinquished all his prejudices against the Catholic priesthood, and on entering the bosom of the Church, he followed the voice of his conscience, which said to him : A religion which produces such lives as these is evidently true. The following is, in a few words, the history of the last moments and glorious death of the holy Archbishop of Milan :—

The whole life of St. Charles was passed in prayer and good works, and was indeed a perpetual retreat, but yet he never failed to make one every year ; and then in the presence of God he spent some days in making a severe review of his conscience, in order to commence anew with a still more fervent spirit of zeal, self-sacrifice, and devotion.

In the year 1584, which was that of his death, he made this retreat with more fervour than usual, in a religious house which became celebrated on account of the stay he made there, and called Montvarelle, upon the borders of Lake Maggiore, sixty miles from Milan. In a narrow cell which he had chosen for his room, he slept on planks covered only with an old piece of coarse cloth ; he only rested three or four hours during the night, and ate nothing but bread, and drank nothing but water. He increased his austerities, which were always most severe ; prayed for six or eight hours every day, and passed a great part of the night in prayer. On the fifth day of his retreat he made his annual confession with a heart so broken with sorrow and such floods of tears, that his confessor could not himself refrain from weeping. He prepared himself the preceding night by remaining eight hours on his knees in prayer, without being exhausted, motionless, and ravished in ecstasy ; and he found the time so short, that he believed

the clock had been put forward. As a vigorous labourer redoubles his energy as the end of the day draws near, so this great saint, considering that little time remained to him, gave himself up wholly to preparation. During all his retreats he had always been very closely united to God, but he now appeared more than ever absorbed in Jesus Christ, and detached from the things of the world. When he said Mass, he was so penetrated with God, and his tears fell so fast, that he was obliged to interrupt the Holy Sacrifice in order to wipe them away. His face then grew so radiant that it appeared transfigured with light, undoubtedly from that interior light which flooded his great soul.

At the end of this retreat, on the 24th of October, our Lord hearing the desires of His faithful servant, sent him an attack of fever, the commencement of the sickness which in a few days should put an end to his earthly exile. St. Charles, ever severe to himself, continued his penitential exercises; and it was only by the desire of his confessor that he consented to soften his austerities a little, and to shorten his prayers and his vigils. He allowed his bread to be prepared in water, without salt and without butter, which was a great delicacy for him. He also permitted a little straw to be placed upon the boards on which he slept, and shortened his prayers by some hours. On the 28th he had a fresh attack which caused him much suffering: but the strength and vigour of his soul sustaining the weakness of a body exhausted by sickness and penance, the holy Cardinal resolved to discontinue his spiritual exercises in order to be at Milan for the approaching feast, and to say the Pontifical Mass there according to his custom.

Upon his road there were two or three towns through which he desired to pass in order to complete certain charitable endowments and reforms of which he had laid the foundation in one of his pastoral visits. Notwithstanding the fever from which he was suffering, he travelled all night, and crossed Lake Maggiore. He said evening prayers with the boatmen and with those in his suite, and asked them if they had prayed to God when they had set forth on their journey. He made them promise that in future they would always say the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, and the Credo at the commencement of each voyage. He passed almost the whole night in prayer, and having reached the little town of Canobbio, the end of the first

part of his journey, he recited his office, confessed, and celebrated Mass. After his thanksgiving he took some bread and water to fortify himself a little, regulated the spiritual affairs of the place, and, notwithstanding his fatigue, went up into the pulpit to preach to the people. From Canobbio he went to Ascona, in spite of the bad weather. When he arrived there he was consumed by burning fever; and was requested to take a little rest in bed, but from a spirit of penance, he would lie on nothing but straw. The attack having passed off, he felt that he could continue his journey so as to be at Milan on the Feast of All Saints. But the doctors opposed it, and he passed the night in this place. The following day they found him risen quite early in the morning, and reciting his office on his knees. He prepared himself to say Mass, and celebrated after having confessed in the church, although he was so feeble that when making the genuflexions some one was obliged to assist him to rise. Nevertheless, he was anxious to fast the whole of that day, because it was the Vigil of All Saints, and he only took a bitter draught by the desire of his physician.

He then set out for a town called Arona, and passed a part of the journey in praying and exhorting the boatmen to live like Christians.

He spoke to them of the Feast of All Saints with so much fervour that they could not restrain their tears. During the little time that he remained at Arona, he gave his whole attention to serious affairs which concerned the glory of God and the salvation of souls. The next day, the Feast of All Saints, he rose two hours after midnight, and prayed until day; then, as on the Vigil, he recited his office, confessed (which he did every day), and prepared to say Mass at seven o'clock. There were a great number to receive Communion because of the Feast. This Mass was the last that he celebrated. A remedy taken at the wrong time increased his disease; the fever became very violent and continued until his death.

The next day (All Souls) he again desired to say Mass, but was so weak that he could not do so. He desired at least to go to church to hear it, and he confessed and communicated with much fervour, afterwards reciting his office on his knees. After having taken some food he embarked once more, and arrived at Milan.

II.

The more nearly the moment approached in which St. Charles was to quit the earth, the more closely were his mind and heart united to God. He had always had a great devotion to the mysteries of the Passion of our Lord, which formed the constant object of his thoughts. This attraction grew more forcible at this supreme moment; and as he could no longer apply himself to close meditation on the suffering of his Divine Master, he had two pictures placed near him in which the Son of God was represented in His sepulchre and during His agony in the garden of Olives. One glance was thus sufficient to recall the love of his Saviour, and to help him to unite his sufferings to the sufferings of his Lord.

It was the 3rd of November. The doctors, after having carefully examined his condition, declared he was in danger. Towards two o'clock the fever became still more violent and was accompanied by extreme drowsiness. It became necessary to announce to the Cardinal that he had only a little time longer to live. His confessor approached his bed, and, his heart full of sorrow, told him with tears that his last hour was come, and that he must soon appear before his Saviour. His great spirit did not shrink at this blow, and he replied calmly that he only desired to be fortified with the holy viaticum and extreme unction. They went immediately to the Cathedral to seek the Blessed Sacrament, and had all the bells in Milan rung to announce to the faithful the extremity of their well-beloved Bishop. During this time his family, his friends, and his servants arrived, with a considerable number of ecclesiastics, to receive for the last time the benediction of this holy pastor. He desired to raise his hand to bless them, but he could not even make the sign of the cross without aid, so great was his feebleness.

When the Blessed Sacrament was brought to him, he summoned all the strength he had left to receive his Saviour worthily. They clothed him in his sacred vestments; from a deep feeling of reverence he desired to leave his bed and kneel down to receive Communion, but he found he was too weak to do this. Whilst extreme unction was being administered, it was remarked that he

made every possible effort to respond to the priest. Immediately after, the last agony began.

His chaplains, remembering that they had often heard him say that he desired to die in sackcloth and ashes, like St. Ambrose, his glorious predecessor, clothed him two hours before his death in sackcloth covered with blessed ashes. The chamber was full of ecclesiastics, some saying the prayers for the recommendation of the departing soul, others reading the Passion, and all obliged by tears to interrupt their prayers every moment. Father Adorus, the confessor of St. Charles, was by his side, holding the crucifix and suggesting a few simple and affecting thoughts from time to time. As soon as they saw that he was unconscious, sobs and tears broke forth from all present. A more affecting sight can scarcely be imagined; the great cardinal, in death's fatal clutches, stretched upon his bed, his eyes raised to heaven, deprived of consciousness, clothed in sackcloth and covered with ashes!

After having remained from five until eight o'clock in the evening peacefully but rapidly sinking, the servant of God, his eyes ever fixed upon the image of his Saviour, which he had had placed before his bed, his face calm and radiant, rendered his pure soul into the hands of his Creator to receive in heaven the reward of all his labours for his Divine Master.

His servants could not weary of kissing his hands and washing them with their tears. On his shoulders were great bruises caused by his discipline. His flesh was hard from the sackcloth which he always wore, and his body thin and wasted to a shadow. They clothed him in his white pontifical vestments, and exposed his body according to custom in Milan Cathedral. During the three days in which it lay there, there was such an immense concourse of people that the streets and public places could not contain them, whilst the approaches to the archiepiscopal palace resembled the flux and reflux of an agitated sea. The poor, especially the widows and orphans, were disconsolate at the loss of their father. During the whole of this time the face of St. Charles preserved an expression of joy and beatitude which appeared a manifest sign of his holiness, and added to the affliction of the Milanese. They buried him according to his wishes in his own cathedral

church, at the foot of the steps leading up to the choir, in the place most trodden under foot.

Many noted miracles obtained for this venerated tomb so universal a devotion that the Holy Apostolic See was almost immediately obliged to make preparations for the beatification and canonisation of Cardinal Borromeo, who was finally declared a saint, and proposed to the pastors of the Church and to the faithful as an accomplished model of all Christian and priestly virtues.

A CONVICT'S LETTER.

DURING the terrible days of the June of 1848, a horrible assassination was committed by the insurgents on the person of the courageous and excellent General de Bréa, who had been made prisoner by treason. When the civil war was at an end, justice overtook the guilty, and out of a great number who were tried by court-martial, five were condemned to death as being guilty of the murder.

In the March of 1849 two were executed, and the sentence of the three others was commuted to hard labour for life. Amongst these last the most intelligent was a young librarian, named André C——, only twenty-three years of age. During his captivity he had deeply repented of the past, but the baneful influences of the prison at Rochfort, to which he was sent after the execution of his two companions, soon had their evil effects, and he was plunged once more into an abyss of evil.

In 1852, transferred to Cayenne, where he has since died, he partially escaped the contagion of the polluting atmosphere in which he lived, and was finally recalled, after a bitter experience, to sentiments more worthy of a man and a Christian. He wrote me a letter which was so touching, so full of faith, of resignation, and true piety, that I think the perusal of it can scarcely fail to be serviceable to my readers.

This is the letter written from Cayenne in June 1856 :—

“REVEREND AND DEAR FATHER,—By the kindness of the Jesuit Fathers I am enabled to address this letter to you, and am going to write as much as possible on these four large sheets without any fear that you will think me troublesome. At the prison and penitentiaries, during

seven years, that is to say, I have neglected my religious duties and have lived as those live who have no faith, and who seek, by worldly sophisms and pretended morality, to substitute, for the fulfilment of religious duties, those convenient morals which are indulgent to vice, and find excuses for every baseness. During these seven years I have offended God by a sinful, reckless life, but, through His infinite goodness, every sin I have committed has brought upon me the dark shadow of remorse and shame ; and an unquiet conscience has not ceased to warn me that eternal punishment would be the certain consequence of so guilty a life. Blessed be God for His great mercy towards me, for how many others who sin continually as I did, do not have these wholesome warnings.

“Without having solicited it, I suddenly became the object of a favour which by separating me from the miserable herd of convicts deprived me of any excuse for continuing my evil life. God was waiting for that moment. To Him alone be glory !

“I assure you sincerely, my dear Father, that if I have preserved the faith whilst leading such a life, I attribute this miracle of mercy to the protection of the Blessed Virgin, and also to the beautiful letters you have so often written me, and which I read again and again, even at my worst moments.

“Since the Easter of this year I have had the happiness to approach many times to Holy Communion. Ah ! how ardently I have desired to lead a life so pure as to enable me to approach to the Divine Banquet every day ! But, alas ! I am still a great sinner, and my sins, though less grievous than formerly, are no less numerous. If I were but more submissive to the holy will of God I should be able to gain some merit in my present position, where crosses, thank God, are not wanting to me. But no. . . . As if I should not thank God for sending me this life of trial by which to expiate my sins.

“Every time that I approach the holy altar I do not fail to remember you and to pray to God to bless your efforts and to give fruit to all your labours for the exaltation of His Holy Church. I never forget to entreat our Lord to watch over His beloved Spouse. Morning and evening I recite a Memorare for your intention, and I earnestly hope that our good Mother hears me, for I do

not ask temporal favours for you, my dear Father, but rather that He will always give you courage to defend the truth as you have done in *Les Reponses*, in which I fancied that a certain passage referred to me. It is about a man condemned for a horrible crime, who is ashamed of being chained up with a thief. This passage in which I believed you were thinking of me troubled me much; but I, alas! my good Father, have grieved you in a very different way, and perhaps, after all, I was mistaken.

“And now permit me, my dear Father, to answer a question which may present itself to your mind. Will my conversion be of any advantage to me humanly speaking? No. . . . The practice of religion by a convict is regarded as an act of hypocrisy. . . . In the midst of all this, the Christian feels a certain pride in serving his Divine Master, and for my own part, I thank the Lord who has found me worthy, in spite of my unworthiness, to hear His voice and to try and serve Him in a place where it is not He who reigns. I thank Him especially that this miserable state of things does not permit any temporal favour to be the reward of a Christian life, but rather an occasion for small and malignant persecutions.

“You asked me, dear Father, in your letter dated from Rome, what were the religious supplies of Guyane. The Reverend Fathers of the Society of Jesus have the charge of the penitentiaries. These good Fathers are continually at the pillows of the sick, and I do not think that their detractors would feel disposed to come here to take their place in order to prevent them from ministering to the convicts; but, in case they should have any desire, it is right they should be warned that their ministrations would be required in yellow fever, in malignant and typhoid fever.

“In this life God tries His friends more severely than His enemies. The life of the Religious of the Society of Jesus at Guyane is a proof of this: they are very numerous, and quite lately, in one fortnight two have died—the Rev. Father Plumpf, Superior, and the Rev. Father Dabadie, whom, perhaps, you knew, as he came from Paris; they have lost seven or eight Fathers, I believe, since they arrived at Guyane.

“The colonial clergy consist of secular priests and of

the Religious of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and of Mary. These are directed by an apostolical Prefect.

“The sons of the good and holy Tibermann are very excellent religious, from whom I have received much kindness. They have a good library, where I get as many books as possible. Their charity and zeal for the unfortunate negroes are not always crowned with success, for the white men are there also. . . . And then the blacks are like great children. Nevertheless God has there, as everywhere, His elect. There are amongst these young people chosen souls, whose simple, earnest faith fills the hearts of Christians with joy.

“In our prayer-books there is often written : ‘The seal of the Christian,’ ‘the sign of the Christian,’ ‘the symbol of the Christian.’ I assure you, my dear Father, that these expressions are far from being metaphors. All these poor blacks are ugly enough to frighten any one ; but in spite of their ugliness, it is easy to distinguish those who are good Christians from those who are not ; the expression of the former is kind and gentle ; and when they go to communion they are in a manner transfigured ; then, I assure you, they are, in my eyes, quite beautiful. As a rule, the black man is, as yet, no philosopher ; he practises his religion, or he does not practise it, but he has faith ; and if it were not for the white men, they would all practise it.

“In the Life of the good F. Tibermann by Don Pitra, I have remarked the engraving which represents the just man after death, and at the bottom I read ‘G. de S. . . . prêtre ;’ this engraving did me great good, and I believe that if I had not been converted, it would have helped to make me detest my sins.

“Before concluding, I have two favours to ask of you, dear Father : the first is, that I should like to possess a medal of the Immaculate Conception, a crucifix, and a rosary blessed by His Holiness.

“The second favour I would ask from your charity, dear Father, is to pray for me a little after my death. I have arranged that you shall be informed of it. I shall have no one to render me this service, and yet, remembering my numerous sins, I may well say with Bayard : ‘A thousand years of fasting in the desert on bread and water would not expiate them.’

“If I make this request of you, Monseigneur, and dear Father, it is because I shall not always live to see others die, but that my turn will also come. As regards death, I am not afraid; not, indeed, that I trust in my own merits, but in the great mercy of God.

“If you would kindly send the little things for which I have asked you to the Reverend Fathers of the Society of Jesus at Paris, they will find means to send them on to Guyane. I do not ask for an answer to this. You know, dear Father, how happy it will make me when you shall think fit to write me a few words.

“Here I must conclude, for I see that I have already written far too much, but it is so long since I have had any talk with you, that I wished to make up for lost time.

“I am, dear Father, with profound respect, your very humble and respectful son in our Lord Jesus Christ,

“ANDRÉ C.”

THE ADMIRABLE MARTYRDOM OF THE VENERABLE AUGUSTE CHAPDELAIN AND TWO OTHER CHRISTIANS OF CHINA.

MARTYR means *Witness*.—The testimony of blood, that is to say, of entire self-devotion, has never been wanting to the true religion, and in our own days, as in the first ages of the Church, the disciples of Jesus are ready to die for their Divine Master.

On the 29th of February 1856, a missionary priest, Auguste Chapdelaine, received in China the glorious palm of martyrdom, and added his name to the long catalogue of the heroes of the faith and love of Jesus Christ. Born in France, at Rochelle, in 1814, Auguste Chapdelaine consecrated himself to God in the ecclesiastical state, and, for three years only, he had commenced, in the midst of the idolatrous provinces of China, the apostolic life of the missionary. God had visibly blessed his efforts, and the budding Christianity which he directed was full of promise, when the blind vengeance of a woman destroyed everything. This woman—a Chinese, and still a pagan, was the wife of a newly-converted Christian, and having had some domestic disagreement with her husband, she went in spite to denounce him to the *mandarin* (a magistrate charged with

the administration of criminal justice), and to denounce with him all that she knew of the Christian mission in that country. The magistrate, a furious enemy of the Christians, sent a number of his satellites to arrest the European missionary and twenty or twenty-five Christians whose names had been especially pointed out to him. Père Chapdelaine, warned of the danger, had concealed himself with a pious neophyte, named Laurent Pé-Mou, in a house which he believed secure. After terrible treatment, which alone constituted a veritable martyrdom, all the Christians accused, and some others also, were loaded with chains, taken before the mandarin, and cast into prison. Amongst them a young Christian widow named Agnes principally distinguished herself; she had been born a Christian, and had greatly contributed by the generosity of her zeal to the conversion of a large number of idolatrous Chinese women.

The missionary was still hidden. Five or six women, wives or sisters of some of the arrested Christians, came to him to ask him what they ought to do, and if it would be well for them to present themselves at the tribunal to beg for the release of their husbands or their brothers. The missionary advised them to do so, but as they were afraid, the courageous Laurent Pé-Mou, the dear neophyte and companion of the priest of Jesus Christ, put himself at their head, and braving all danger, presented himself before the mandarin. But he, having learned that Laurent was a Christian as well as the women who accompanied him, would not even listen to his petition, but caused them all to be loaded with irons.

During this time they had discovered the missionary's refuge. His house was surrounded, the chief of the guards entered his room where he found him prostrate in prayer, and preparing himself for sacrifice, like the Saviour in the Garden of Olives. They then seized upon the holy priest, chained him with two other Christians whom they found in his house, and led them together to the mandarin's tribunal; so that in the evening of the 25th of February, these noble confessors, to the number of four or five and twenty, were all united to render homage to the sanctity of their faith. How grand a spectacle! How beautiful it must have been in the sight of all the courts of heaven, and how touching for those poor neophytes who, from their first entrance into Christianity, had so willingly embraced

the opprobrium and humiliation of their Divine Master's life below. Then they understood the signification of a miraculous sign which Heaven had given them, doubtless to increase their courage. At Yao-chan, on the very day upon which the arrest took place, a crown of light with a cross in the middle was seen above this village, and was perceived by the idolaters as well as by the faithful. The pagans declared that it was an evil augury for the accused ; the Christians, on the contrary, were thus enabled to understand later on that it was through the cross that they should gain the crown, and they humbly submitted to any fate that Providence should decree.

As soon as they reached the prison they were loaded with irons and severely beaten with the ratan, and were subjected to an interrogatory, of which we have some fragments preserved by eyewitnesses. To chains they added the cangue which they had the happiness to bear all night for the name of JESUS CHRIST.

On the following day Laurent Pé-Mou appeared the first at the bar of the tribunal. He who had offered himself so gladly to follow the missionary in his tribulation had the glory of being the first to confess Jesus Christ with all the courage and constancy with which a lively faith inspired his soul. The mandarin, addressing himself to him, tried from the commencement to appal him with terrible menaces.

"Why," he demanded, "do you practise the religion of the Lord of heaven, which is a perverse religion, and leads the people to rebellion ?"

"No," replied the generous neophyte, "the religion of the God of heaven deserves none of your reproaches. It teaches us instead to avoid evil, to practise good, and to save our souls."

"Why do you follow the teacher *Ma* (the Chinese name of M. Chapdelaine) ?"

"I follow him because he teaches us to know the true God and to practise His holy religion."

"Will you follow him still ?"

"I will never forsake him !"

"If you do not forsake him, and if you do not renounce your religion, your head shall be cut off."

"The mandarin may cut off my head, and not only mine, but that of my wife and my children ; but to renounce my religion, the religion of the God of heaven, to cease to

address my prayers to Him, ah! never; I will never be guilty of so black a treason. Mandarin, cut off my head, if you wish, but I will never apostatise."

The mandarin, irritated at this answer, ordered many stripes to be given him; but seeing that Laurent did not waver in his resolution, he exclaimed in anger, "If you wish to have your head cut off it shall be done." And calling one of his savage attendants, he ordered him to be decapitated.

The sacred relics of this glorious martyr of Jesus Christ have not yet been discovered. Some say that they were buried; others, on the contrary, assert that they were cast upon the highway. But what of this! God will know where to find them, and will one day glorify the body which suffered so gloriously for Him. It was only five days since this holy champion of the faith had been regenerated in the sacred waters of baptism; he had then received the name of the holy martyr Laurent, whose constancy he was destined to imitate so well. And even as his holy patron desired not to be separated from St. Sixtus when walking to execution, so Laurent Pé-Mou desired never to be separated from his dear father in the Faith, M. Chapdelaine. Like him he faced the fury of tyrants without shrinking; like him, his soul, purified and beautified by the blood he so nobly shed, was united to the glorious army of martyrs, and shares in their glory for all eternity. The execution of the young Agnes followed that of Laurent Pé-Mou. But before relating the triumph of this young heroine, we must say a few words about her early years.

Born in 1833, in the province of Kouei-Tcheou, the daughter of a poor old Christian doctor, Agnes Tsaou-Kong was remarkable from her tenderest years for her deep piety and her faithful practice of all Christian virtues. At the age of fifteen she became an orphan, and being thus deprived of all help she was provided for by the charity of the missionaries of the province, who sent her to school, where she made remarkable progress in the writing and reading of Chinese books. The following year she was married to a Christian, who died four years afterwards, and left the young Agnes poor and without any support, but ever devout and perfectly resigned to the holy will of God. In the meantime the province of Quang-Si received the faith, and the number of neophytes rapidly increasing, by the entreaty of

M. Chapdelaine this young woman was sent to him in order to instruct persons of her own sex in the Christian faith. Agnes acquitted herself perfectly of the charge entrusted to her. Of a tried virtue, gentle, patient, always contented with her lot whatever it might be, she thought of nothing but gaining souls to God and directing them in the ways of salvation. Thus she prepared herself by the practice of the duties of her position to enter into the lists of the heroines of the Faith, and to fight the glorious combats of the Church of God. Being seized on the 24th of February, doubtless because she had distinguished herself from others by her courage, she was chained and led before the judge, who tried by a thousand means to shake her constancy; but Agnes showed herself ever invincible in faith. Neither the promises, the menaces, nor the maledictions with which the brutal mandarin attacked her, nor the prospect of the torments which awaited her could shake her resolution to belong entirely to God and to remain faithful to Him till the last moment of her life. Amongst the different interrogations which the mandarin addressed to her, the following were especially noted as showing the calm simplicity of her soul:—

“Whence do you come?”

“From Kouei-Tcheon, of Hyn-y-Fou.”

“Who taught you the Christian religion?”

“My parents, who were always Christians. Afterwards I was sent to school, where I learned to read a little.”

“Why are you come here?”

“Two years ago, a great number of persons in this country having embraced the Christian faith, I came to teach the women and young girls to pray and to serve God.”

“Why do you teach them to steal like the birds?”

“I do not teach them to steal but to pray. The mandarin knows well that that is a calumny invented against us.”

“Why do you instruct them in the night instead of in the day?”

“Because in the day they are at work, but in the evening they are free.”

“Tell me,” he added without even attempting to hide his venality, “how much money has the teacher *Ma*?”

“I do not know.”

He asked several other questions, and concluded by say-

ing, "If you do not renounce the religion of your teacher *Ma*, you shall die."

"Cause me to die if such be your will, but I will never renounce the religion of the teacher *Ma*, since his is the religion of the God of heaven!"

"How would you choose to die?"

"In the same manner as our teacher *Ma*."

The mandarin consented to her choice and had a cage prepared for her immediately, similar to that of the missionary, and of which we shall presently give a description. She entered it on the 28th of February at the same time as Père Chapdelaine. Separated by a little distance they could see, but could not speak to each other; a touching circumstance for these two martyrs of Jesus who, devoted to the same work, were tried by the same torments, and had the hope of going together to receive the same reward. After having passed four days in the midst of this cruel torture, this holy martyr, consumed by hunger and thirst, shattered and mutilated, commended her spirit into the hands of her Creator, and went to receive from Jesus her Lord the glorious crown of martyrdom. It seems probable that her body was buried, but the place where it reposes has not yet been discovered. Let us hope that God will one day permit it to be restored to the veneration of the faithful.

Lastly, after having contemplated with his own eyes the combats of his generous neophytes, it was just that the priest of Jesus Christ, the apostle of the faith, should in his turn appear upon the scene, and give proof of the courage with which Divine grace had filled his soul. Interrogated first as to his religion, the venerable Chapdelaine replied as he was bound to do, but the mandarin, then proceeding to ask insolent questions such as these: "How much money have you? Why do you teach your sectarians to steal?" the missionary, either because he did not clearly understand the mandarin, as some have thought, or because he desired to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ before Herod, was silent, and answered nothing to his invectives. The angry judge ordered him to receive a hundred stripes on the cheek with murderous leathern thongs, a single stroke of which was sufficient to cover the face with blood; so that these hundred blows administered with all the force that vengeance and fanaticism give, knocked out

the teeth and broke the jaw of the glorious martyr. Being thus wholly unable to speak and to answer, they made him lie down and gave him three hundred strokes more upon the back. During these horrible tortures he uttered no murmurs nor the least complaint, so that the mandarin and those who were with him were overcome with wonder and astonishment: for it is the custom of malefactors in China when undergoing punishment to groan loudly and continuously, and to implore the mandarin to pardon them; but this holy confessor, united heart and soul to his suffering Lord, could endure the most cruel torments without betraying with his lips the agony which overwhelmed him. The mandarin, attributing such extraordinary silence to the art of magic, caused a dog to be killed, and his blood to be sprinkled over the martyr's body; after that they continued to strike him without counting the blows, until they saw that he was incapable of moving, then they carried him back to prison as it was impossible to make him walk. But, O compassionate goodness of God! behold, an instant afterwards he rose and began to walk as he had done in perfect health. The guards, who were witnesses of this miracle, approached and asked him how it was that he could walk now when an instant before he could not move? The father replied, smiling: "It is God who has protected and blessed me!" Surely nothing more was needed to prove the innocence of the generous martyr of Jesus Christ; but these blind and furious men, seeing in this new miracle only another reason to believe in his magical power, caused a repast to be served to him consisting of those viands which in that country are accounted unclean, so as to destroy in him the effect of his enchantments. As he knew that those who practise secret arts have a horror of such dishes and regard them as an antidote to their mysterious practices, he partook of all to prove that he belonged to no secret or proscribed sect, but in very small quantities, and this was the only food that was offered him from the moment of his arrest until the time when he was admitted to the divine banquet that awaited him above, the mandarin having forbidden, under penalty of death, that anything whatever should be given him.

The holy martyr was now condemned to death, and was enclosed, opposite to Agnes as we have before said, in a

wooden cage exposed to the burning sun. There they placed him. His hands were tied behind his back, his head passed through a hole, so that he was almost suspended by the neck, his feet scarcely touching the bottom of the cage. The savage guards watched him night and day. . . Agnes died on the fourth day. The holy missionary did not succumb until the day following. As soon as he was dead, his guards cut his body in pieces, and took out his heart, which they ate after having fried it in a frying-pan.

His holy body has never been found. Only the head of the martyr is in possession of the Christians. Cut off from the body, and placed in a little cage, it was suspended to the branches of a tree by the tress of hair which the Chinese always keep on the top of the head and allow to grow to its full length. After a fortnight this tress broke and remained attached to the branch from which it was taken by the faithful and sent to Paris to the Chapel of the Martyrs. The head, stripped of the flesh, was for some time the object of the outrages and cruel games of the infidel children, who rolled it in the sand. It was at last removed by hands more worthy, and reverently placed in a secret spot. Pius IX. has already declared the martyr Auguste Chapdelaine *venerable*, and has commanded that the process of his beatification should be commenced.

Such is the abridged recital of the cruel and admirable martyrdom inflicted by the Chinese in our own days upon a Catholic priest whom France had the honour to give to the world and to the Church. Let us hope that this new saint will remember, amongst the divine joys of the celestial country, the sorrows and necessities of the country that was his below, and that he will obtain for us, as well as for the companions of his triumph, the benedictions of God, which alone can restore faith to the world and arrest the destructive torrent of impiety !

MARTYRDOM OF THE YOUNG POLISH PRIEST, STANISLAUS ISZORA.

THE first and principal cause of the implacable hatred of the Russians against Poland is that Poland is Catholic. Schism is still more bitter in its bigotry than heresy.

Many times during a century the Russian schism has torn Poland in pieces and covered her with blood, hoping to destroy her altogether—first under the celebrated and detestable Empress Catharine, the friend of Voltaire; then under the Czar Nicholas I., of terrible memory; lastly, in our own days, cruelties and massacres, worthy of the ancient Cæsars, have decimated Poland, and governors, generals, and Russian priests burn, torture, and cover with blood and ruins the faithful nation which would rather die than apostatise.

The Catholic priests have been, even as in the primitive ages of the Church, the principal objects of the persecution. One amongst them, still quite young (he was only thirty years of age), has just rendered to his faith and to his glorious country the testimony of his blood. This was the young Abbé Stanislaus Iszora, the descendant of an ancient and noble race, martyred at Wilna, in Lithuania, the 3d of June 1863.

Stanislaus Iszora, after his ecclesiastical studies and his promotion to the priesthood, had been sent as assistant priest to the venerable *curé* of Zoludko, in the district of Lida. In order to preserve peace and concord between the peasants and the proprietors of Zoludko, he had read from the pulpit a declaration from the Polish lords and proprietors conceding to the peasants the lands which they had hitherto cultivated as farmers, thus paralysing the perfidious plots of the schismatics, who attributed to the Catholic nobles all manner of perverse designs, in order to stir up the people against them, and to sow division amongst the Poles. The Abbé Iszora having learned that the ferocious Murawieff, the new Russian Governor of Varsovia, had issued against him an order of arrest as a rebel to the laws, concealed himself, and joined a number of poor Poles, fugitives like himself, wandering in the woods. He became their chaplain. The authorities failing to find him, seized in his stead the *curé* of the parish, an infirm old man entirely innocent of the act laid to the charge of his assistant priest. But he in order to deliver the venerable prisoner, left his unfortunate companions, and came of his own free will to place himself in the hands of the Russians. It should be remarked that it was before the 1st of May, before the term fixed by the imperial amnesty, that he surrendered himself a prisoner; and although his

object was not to obtain pardon for himself nor to profit by the amnesty, but to restore liberty to his *curé* detained on his account, he ought none the less, according to the terms of the edict, to have been pardoned and set at liberty. But the *justice* of Russia is *schismatic*; she does not willingly let her prey escape. Entirely regardless of the treaty of amnesty, they kept the Abbé Iszora in prison, and brought him before a military commission, which pronounced upon him the sentence of death. Wazimow, the Governor of Poland before Murawieff, commuted this punishment to five years exile in Siberia, and Murawieff tore up the letters of pardon, and arbitrarily revived the sentence of death. The dean of Wilna was desired to go to the prison on the 3d of June at six in the morning to confess the Abbé Stanislaus Iszora. He found him confined in a cell with the Abbé Szyrwid, *curé* of Wasilew. The young priest at the sight of the dean rose in haste, and threw himself on the neck of his old professor of the academy. Understanding the object of this early visit, he entreated the dean to attend first to the Abbé Szyrwid, a priest much advanced in years. "As for me," he said, "I am young," I trust I shall have courage to suffer, sustained by the hope of the future prosperity of my country." The dean having replied that he was sent to him alone, he prepared himself for confession, and received the sacrament of penance with the greatest fervour. The dean having fulfilled his mission, and unwilling to believe that the execution was near at hand, left the prisoner, promising to come again to see him. Crossing the prison yard he met an old septuagenarian, who asked him if it were true that the Abbé Iszora was going to be shot. This was the father of the prisoner, whose paternal heart was filled with presentiments as to the fate of his son. The dean replied that he knew absolutely nothing. This conversation attracted the Cossack general Szamszow. He inquired of the dean if he had confessed the prisoner, and given him communion.

"I received no order to take him communion," was the reply.

"Then lose no time in doing so," answered the general.

The dean returned to Abbé Iszora's cell, and told him that he had been desired to bring him the Holy Communion.

"I well understand the reason," said the young priest;

“I am ready to drink the chalice to the dregs. Only tell me if I am to be shot, or to die on the gallows ; hide nothing from me, I am prepared for anything.”

The dean replied with emotion : “I take God to witness that I know nothing. But do not disturb yourself. Only think of preparing yourself to receive our Lord.”

“That is what I desire to do,” replied the prisoner.

Half an hour afterwards the dean administered to him the Holy Communion, which he received with angelic fervour. The hour which followed was passed in conversation between the young martyr and his confessor. The Abbé Iszora was more tranquil than the dean, and tried to cheer him. Suddenly the door opened, and the keeper of the prison, addressing himself to the condemned, only uttered one word—“Come !” The two priests rose ; and before going out the Abbé Iszora slipped secretly into the hand of his confessor a sum of sixteen roubles (this was all he possessed) to be distributed amongst the poor. They found in the prison-yard a numerous escort, in the midst of which they were placed, and they turned to the *faubourg*, where the execution was to take place. The journey lasted more than an hour. Whoever (wrote an eyewitness) has seen Stanislaus Iszora walking to his death, surrounded by his executioners, with perfect serenity and wonderful tranquillity of mind, will never forget this touching spectacle, and will ask God to grant him the same faith and the same courage when his last hour shall come. The young priest was agreeable and distinguished in appearance, with a fair, fresh complexion and blue eyes. His serene, smiling face showed the calmness and resignation of his soul. He wore a cassock, and walked on foot. He passed through an immense crowd of people who watched him with eyes full of tears. During the whole time he showed not the least sign of weakness or apprehension ; his expression was calm and serious. To see him advancing thus reciting with his companion priest the prayers of the Church, one would have said that he was going to render the last offices to a deceased brother, whilst they were the prayers of his own agony which he was reciting, his own funeral escort which he was himself conducting.

The market-place was crowded with peasants ; the whole population of Wilna seemed there. The soldiers of the escort had much trouble to clear a passage through the

rowd to reach the circle formed by the cavalry and infantry round the fatal stake. The Abbé Iszora bowed with a smile to the commissaries who awaited him at the foot of the stake, and advanced towards them with the same even step. After the reading of the sentence he knelt down to pray, received absolution from his confessor, then rose, gave his benediction to the people, whose sobs and cries of indignation he heard, and tenderly embracing the priest who assisted him, entreated him to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice for his intention. He, his eyes bathed in tears, embraced him in his turn with affection, and giving him the cross to kiss: "We will pray for you," he said, "but it is rather you who should pray for us in the heaven you are about to enter." The Abbé Stanislaus then kissed the cross, restored it to his confessor, pressing his hand for the last time, and delivered himself up to his executioners. They bound him to the stake. He asked to die with his face uncovered. This they refused. He was then obliged to submit to being enveloped in a long veil which covered him to the feet. It was still the Dean of Wilna who put on him this funeral sheet. But before the accomplishment of this formality which was to shut the earth from his sight for ever, the holy priest raised towards heaven a radiant face, already bright with the glory of the heavenly abode whose gates were even now opening to receive him. Then twelve soldiers advanced, and a volley was immediately heard. Groans resounded from all present, but the victim gave no cry and made no movement; he was living still. In Russia they do not kill with the first shots; so prompt a death would seem too sweet; they torture the victim with successive volleys which inflict terrible wounds, and thus prolong the agony.

After the first discharge, which had no fatal result, General Szamszow, who commanded the troops, perceived that the eyes of the soldiers who were firing were blinded with tears. He approached to reprimand them. But their emotion communicated itself to him, and, a thing rare for a Cossack, he was moved himself, and could only make a sign to them to fire again. They therefore reloaded, took their aim at the head and at the heart, and shot once more. A fresh cry of horror came from the lips of the multitude. The Abbé Iszora fell forward, and would have fallen to

the ground but for the bonds which fastened him to the stake. He was dead.

The soldiers immediately possessed themselves of his clothes, and threw his body into a grave which had been dug beforehand near the place of execution. This grave was filled with earth and with lime, and the horses of the Cossacks were ridden over the spot several times, so that no trace should be left, and the troops retired at once from the place. Then the grief and indignation of the crowd broke forth, and more than one voice was heard to exclaim : "God will avenge the death of the martyr !" After this sad execution, the father of the young Polish martyr became mad, and the mother died of grief.

KIND ACTIONS ARE NEVER UNREWARDED.

THE celebrated Doctor Dupuytren, one of the most famous French surgeons, hid a kind heart beneath a rough exterior. In the following facts we may see that it was to a charitable action that he doubtless owed the greatest grace of his life, the greatest that God can grant a man, that of dying a holy Christian death.

One day a priest entered the great surgeon's consulting room. He had a timid, hesitating manner, was poorly if not shabbily dressed, and had a mild and gentle expression. Dupuytren recognised him at once as the village curé. He asked him in his usual rough manner what he wanted ; and the good curé explained in a few words that he was priest of a little parish in the diocese of Versailles, that he was suffering cruelly from a wen on the head, and that, by the entreaties of his parishioners, he had come to ask him to examine it and to tell him of a remedy. Dupuytren just glanced at the seat of the disease, touched it, and said to the poor priest :

"It would be of no use for you to come again, I can do nothing, the disease is incurable."

The good curé rose, asked the doctor to excuse the trouble he had given him, and moved quietly away, saying half to himself : "My poor parishioners will be very grieved !"

Dupuytren, struck by the calmness of his manner and by his simple unselfish reflection, roughly recalled him, made another and a more careful examination, and said :

"If you like to come on Thursday to the Hotel-Dieu, I will attempt a doubtful operation which may save you if it succeed."

"I shall be at the Hotel-Dieu on Thursday morning," replied the curé, and he took leave of the doctor.

On Thursday, at the time appointed, Dupuytren arrived at the hospital, and the first face that he perceived was that of the village curé. He went up to him at once, asked him if he were ready to submit to the painful operation that might save him; and on the reply of the priest in the affirmative, made the usual preparations. The students who surrounded him remarked that his face, instead of wearing its usually impassive expression, was a little agitated, and that his hand shook as he selected the instrument proper for the operation.

As he was about to begin, the doctor told two of his assistants to hold the patient; but the holy priest raising his eyes towards him said quietly and firmly: "It is unnecessary, doctor, I shall not move." And he did not move, but during the whole of the operation, whilst his blood was flowing fast beneath the surgeon's steel, he remained motionless, his eyes fixed upon the image of his crucified Saviour.

When the operation was ended, Dupuytren pressed the hand of the courageous ecclesiastic with an emotion which he did not attempt to conceal, and left the bedside as pale as the patient himself. The next day he returned, took off the bandages, appeared satisfied, and said to the priest:

"It is going on well, your life is saved."

The good curé raised his eyes to heaven, took the doctor's hands in his, and said:

"I thank you for my poor parishioners, monsieur; they will be very happy and will pray to God for you."

A few days after the worthy curé, completely cured, left the hospital and returned to his dear parish.

The following summer Dupuytren saw him enter his study once more holding a basket in his hand. This time he went forward at once to meet the good priest, and received him with visible pleasure. The poor curé brought to his preserver a present from his parishioners: the first fruits of their humble gardens. The doctor received this touching proof of gratitude with emotion, and the curé left him with a light heart, carrying his empty basket.

Many years passed by, and Dupuytren seemed to have forgotten the village curé ; but the calm grave face, so full of gentleness, was deeply engraven on his heart ; and there it still remained, thanks be to God, when the moment of his death drew near. When, by the aid of that professional skill which had so rarely deceived him, he perceived with certainty that his last hour was approaching, Dupuytren remembered that there was a God to whom he must render an account of his works, and he remembered also that, engaged in the service of his God, there was a holy humble priest to whom he had formerly rendered a service, and who had promised not to forget him. Then he hesitated no longer but sent for the poor village curé. A few hours after the good priest was at his pillow, now assisting in his turn him who had formerly done him such good service, and bringing him, in exchange for the life of the body which the skilful surgeon had preserved, the life of the soul with its eternal hopes. Dupuytren humbly confessed, received the Sacraments of the Church with faith and love, and died peacefully in the arms and with the benediction of the venerable curé.

It was thus that God rewarded him for his good work, and thus the Divine words of infinite mercy and goodness were once more accomplished : " Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."

A LITTLE CANDLE TO MARY.

Two poor old people, husband and wife, lived with much difficulty in a miserable little garret, for which they paid twenty francs a year. They often went to bed without any supper, and their breakfast very often consisted of a few hard crusts soaked in water. They could not bear to make their poverty known and ask for relief. Once they had lived in comfort, but little by little they had sold everything. One Saturday they found themselves left without a penny, without a morsel of bread or food of any description. The wife was very infirm, the husband was sick and obliged to keep his bed. The day was passed in suffering, and when the night came they had eaten nothing. They wept and they prayed. The Sunday which followed was

still more terrible. In the evening positive want drove the poor old woman forth with the intention of asking help; but when she tried to speak, shame prevented her; and she returned to her room more exhausted and discouraged than before. For forty-eight hours they had eaten nothing. Their faces were pale and wan, their strength was almost gone.

"We must die, my poor wife," said the old man, "God has forsaken us."

The poor old woman did not answer. But a little time after she raised her head, and cried, as though struck with a sudden inspiration :

"Let us invoke the Blessed Virgin, she is the Comforter of the afflicted and the Refuge of those who suffer. She will deliver us. Wait," she added, "I have one little candle left. We will light it before her image; Mary will come to our aid."

The unfortunate people, reanimated by this last hope, rose with difficulty, and in the midst of the darkness of the night, they found the candle, lighted it, and placing it before a little statue of the Blessed Virgin, which had found no purchasers because it had no material value, they knelt down and, leaning against each other, called to their aid *Her* who is never, we are told, invoked in vain.

They wept bitterly. . . .

A workwoman who lived opposite, in the same street, had a sick child. She got up in the middle of the night to give it something to drink, and looking out of the window perceived the light in the little window of her two poor neighbours. She knew them a little, as they always spoke to each other when they met.

"Can those poor people be ill then?" she wondered. And urged by some instinct she put on her things, took a lantern, and went in to see them. She pushed open the door, and a heartrending sight met her eyes. The two poor old people gasping for breath, and reduced to the last extremity, were rather prostrate than kneeling before the image of the Mother of the Saviour.

Then they acknowledged their pressing want.

The charitable neighbour hastened home immediately to fetch them broth and bread, and other little provisions. She comforted and ministered to them. The following day she went to tell the *curé* and the president of the

Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Both came at once to these unfortunate people, and kindly reproaching them for not having sent to them before, gave them immediate help, to be followed soon by more substantial assistance.

A few days after, as a crowning blessing, a little heritage came to them from a distant relation, and thus, for ever secured from poverty, they relate to all who care to hear it the truly miraculous assistance which they received from the Blessed Virgin Mary. Without the little candle, or rather without that confidence in Mary which suggested to them the pious idea of burning it before her image, the kind neighbour would not have come to their aid, and they would have died of want before the arrival of the heritage.

THE LITTLE EUCHOLOGY.

(By an Officer in Retreat.)

IN 1851 I was living at Paris. I was returning home one evening, stopping from time to time before the handsome shops where the rich merchandise of the capital tempts the passers-by at every step.

At a window full of second-hand books which I had been turning over half mechanically, I suddenly bought, scarcely knowing why, a little *Euchology* hidden in the midst of a heap of worthless books. I had never had a work of this kind in my house before. I had always looked upon its contents as useless and unprofitable reading. Nevertheless, I bought it, I repeat, scarcely thinking what I did. Returning home, I went to bed, but before falling asleep I took up my new acquisition and opened the pages at hazard. My eyes fell, not by chance, for there is no such thing as chance, but by the infinite mercy of God, upon the *Evening Prayer*. It began thus:—

“ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

“ Let us place ourselves in the presence of God and adore Him.

“ O my God, I adore Thee with that entire submission with which the presence of Thy sovereign greatness inspires me. I believe in Thee because Thou art the very truth. I hope in Thee because Thou art infinitely good. I love Thee with my whole heart because Thou art worthy of all love, and for Thy sake I love my neighbour as myself.

“ Let us return thanks to God for all His benefits.

“ O my God, how can I thank Thee for all the graces and blessings I

have received from Thee. Thou hast thought of me from all eternity. Thou hast drawn me out of nothingness, and Thou hast given Thy life to redeem me; and day by day Thou dost crown me yet again with Thy infinite mercy and goodness. Alas, my Lord! what can I render to Thee in return for all Thy goodness?" . . .

These simple, earnest words, so consoling, and yet so impressive, had an almost incredible effect upon me. The tears rose to my eyes, and a peace unknown until that day filled my heart. This was the first time for many years that I had realised that which all the world is seeking—a little true happiness. The next morning I opened my book again. The morning prayer touched my heart as the evening prayer had done the night before; and I felt myself urged by a secret force that I could not resist to go to church. I knelt down in a corner, and there I began to pray, or more truly, to weep. In truth I cannot tell what passed within me. I had no distinct thought, but God touched my soul. . . . I commenced to be a Christian. I had a glimpse of a new life, and of a world, as it were, until then unknown. I remained in this state of transition for many weeks. I prayed in secret, not daring as yet to allow the change which had come over me to be perceived by my friends, nor even by my wife and children. I felt that this was a weakness; nevertheless human respect held me back. But regret for my past life grew stronger within me every day. On the other hand I shrank from the prospect of confession with fear. This acknowledgment, so salutary, but at the same time so painful, when many years have been passed far away from God, only presented itself to my mind under its most severe and humiliating aspect. But happily for me, God was the stronger, and one day I summoned all my courage and made a resolution.

In the evening I entered the church, the way to which was now happily familiar, and requested a priest who was just leaving it to listen to me for an instant. He heard me with a kindness which touched my heart, and soon after I was kneeling at his feet, violently torn by the shame of all I had to say, and the happiness which would result from this acknowledgment. I desired, and yet I did not desire, and I knew not how or where to begin. The good priest helped me, questioned me, drew from me the confession of all my sins, softening the humiliation with a mercy which was wholly paternal, and encouraging

me to hope. It was thirty-two years since I had fulfilled any religious duty. My repentance was deep and sincere. I received with unspeakable consolation that merciful pardon which our Lord gives to all His prodigal children by the ministry of His priests, and which restores to us the lost glory of our innocence. "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven," said the Son of God, and I now heard one who was the depository of this Divine power pronounce above my head these words of life and resurrection: "I absolve thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

I shall never forget that solemn moment, nor the charitable, compassionate ministry which was to me the instrument of the mercy of God: "Go in peace," said my confessor with emotion when the sentence was pronounced; "Go in peace, my child, and sin no more, but remain henceforward faithful to your Saviour." From that time I have been a Christian. I glory in a faith and in a life which preserves me from evil, which raises me above my passions, and causes me to fulfil my duties with facility and joy. I believe, I hope, I love. I pray, I confess, and I communicate. Let him who is not happy, and yet desires to be, do as much as this. And let him open the Prayer-Book which he has, perhaps, long laid aside; let him read, as I read, the morning and the evening prayers. I trust that they will lead him where I myself was led.

A MISTAKE.

AT Douai, in Flanders, there lived a good priest whose whole life was absorbed in works of unceasing benevolence and piety. From the religious care of the soldiers, whom he loved as a father, he went on to care for all the poor and destitute who came within his reach. He sought them out in street and garret. He gave them all that he possessed, and what is better far than alms, he brought to them the help and consolations of religion, peace of conscience, and gladness of heart.

One evening in the December of 1855, after a long and busy day he returned to his humble dwelling, and rested from his apostolic labours whilst reciting the Divine Office. There was a knock at the door. He opened it, and perceived

a little girl, who entreated him to come as quickly as possible to a poor lady who was dying, and who lived in Rue _____, No. 28.

The good priest was anxious to go at once with the child to the house named, but the little messenger said that it was not so urgent as that, but that she only came to ask him not to put off his visit till the next day in case of death. He then wrote down the address, and sent the child back to say that he was coming.

When he had ended the recitation of his office he set out at once regardless of the fast falling rain and the bitter coldness of the night. A soul was to be saved, one in sorrow and suffering was to be comforted; with such an end in view what were cold and rain? On reaching the street the child had named, the priest went into No. 18, convinced that that was the number which had been given him. It was a very poor and humble dwelling. The priest went softly up the staircase and knocked at the first door he came to. A man opened it, and perceiving some one in the garb of an ecclesiastic, greeted him with a burst of angry abuse, and replied insultingly and in the negative to the inquiry of the priest if there were any one sick in the room, and then shut the door in his face.

Meek and patient like his Divine Master the good priest went quietly away and knocked at another door, where he met with no better success. He then went up to the second story, where he found a little boy on the landing.

"My child," he said, "could you tell me the room of a poor lady who is living in this house, and who is very ill? Her name is Madame G_____."

"In that room down there at the end of the passage there is a poor lady who is very ill, Monsieur le Curé; father said she would not live through the night; but I do not think it is the name you said."

"Never mind the name, but show me the door, my child."

And the little boy led the way. The priest opened the door and entered the room. Near to a bed on which was stretched an evidently dying woman there was seated a man of about fifty years of age. He rose immediately and seemed astonished at the sight of the priest, who greeted him kindly, and asked how his poor wife was; "for this is doubtless your wife, and you are Monsieur G_____."

"I? nothing of the kind!" replied the owner of the

room indignantly. "Who sent you here, pray, to meddle with our affairs."

"But some one came for me," replied the priest, greatly astonished. "They told me that some poor Madame G—— was dying, and desired to receive the last sacraments without delay. If I have mistaken the street, or the house, or the room, it seems to me, at least, that the poor lady here has no less need of my holy ministry. God has doubtless led me here, and has permitted this mistake."

"Yes, yes, Father, it was God who led you here," murmured the weak voice of the dying woman.

"Nothing of the kind," exclaimed the husband. "It is more than ten years since a priest has stepped foot into my house, and you shall not hear my wife's confession; she belongs to me, and you may attend to your own concerns."

"You are mistaken, Monsieur," said the priest gently yet firmly. "Your wife belongs to God before belonging to you, and you have no right over her soul. If she desires to confess, I will hear her confession; and it is my duty not to forsake her until, by her own will, she shall refuse my ministry."

Then approaching the sick woman, he asked—

"Do you desire to be reconciled to God and to die a Christian death?"

The poor woman clasped her hands and began to weep for joy. "I thank God for this," she said. "For many days I have entreated my husband to call in a priest, and he would not. I desire to make my peace with God, who has had pity upon me."

"You hear this, Monsieur," said the priest, now turning to the husband. "Be so good as to leave me alone for some moments with your poor wife."

These words were spoken with so much firmness and resolution that the man was forced to retire, which he did, muttering angrily.

"See, Father, what has saved me," said the dying woman, weeping and pointing out to the priest a rosary hanging from her bed. "I have been weak enough to fear my husband more than God, and to avoid quarrels, I have neglected all my religious duties for ten or eleven years. But I have never ceased to commend myself to the Blessed Virgin. Every day I have said a decade of my rosary, and I have always had a devotion to the Blessed

Mother of God. It is she, Father who has brought you to me ; it is she who has interceded for my poor soul !”

Deeply touched, the good priest consoled the sick woman, helped her in her confession, absolved her from her sins, and told her, on leaving, to prepare herself as well as she could to receive the holy viaticum and extreme unction, which he was going to bring from a neighbouring parish. On leaving he almost insisted on shaking hands with the husband, who returned in great discontent to his happy wife. The good Father now searched in his note-book for the address of the sick person who had sent for him, and found that instead of being No. 18, it was No. 28. Whilst thanking God for this happy mistake, he hastened to the other house, where he found the sick woman who was really expecting him. He heard her confession, then, without loss of time, went to wake the sacristan of the parish ; and taking the Blessed Sacrament with the holy oils, returned to his two sick penitents ; but when he reached No. 18 the poor woman had just expired. She had received the pardon of her sins in sacramental absolution, and the fervour of her good will had, doubtless, supplied in the eyes of a God of mercy for those other aids which the priest was bringing her.

Full of faith and gratitude towards the Blessed Virgin, the Refuge of sinners, the Consolatrix of the afflicted, the priest of God administered to his other sick penitent the last Sacraments of the Church ; and it was he who himself related to me this touching adventure. It is but another instance which helps to prove how great are the treasures of benediction which spring from devotion to Mary, and how merciful Jesus is to those who love His Mother.

FILIAL PIETY.

IN a very small house in a poor neighbourhood of Paris lived a family, deserving of interest from their poverty and misfortunes. It consisted of five persons, the father and mother and three boys, of whom the eldest was scarcely fifteen. He was a young apprentice. I shall not give his name nor the calling in which he had been employed for three years, but shall merely say that at the workshops where he was engaged every one loved him ; not only his companions, but his master, because he was kind and oblig-

ing to the former, respectful and submissive to the latter. At the *patronage** he was cited as a model of goodness; whilst in his own home he seemed like the guardian angel of the house. But it yet remained to be seen to how great an extent his filial piety would carry him.

For three months the father of our young apprentice had been ill and out of work, the little savings of the summer were gradually dwindling away; at last they were left without even a penny in the house.

This was during the long days of winter. One evening at five o'clock, the young apprentice returning from the workshop found his old father quite broken down, his mother weeping, and his two little brothers in a distant corner sobbing for sympathy. Louis quickly perceived the reason of this grief. There was no bread in the house, and the poor mother was suffering less for herself than for her children. What could he do? What would become of them?

After a moment's silence, the astonished family perceived that Louis was putting on an old blouse over his usual dress, and directly after he went out, saying that he should be gone about two or three hours, but that he should bring back some bread as he knew how to get some. He spoke with so much confidence, and the need was so pressing, that they let him go without further question.

It was nearly midnight when the young apprentice returned, but he came bringing the bread that was so much needed. They question him, they regard him with astonishment. Where has he been? What has he done? If chance or business had occasioned you to leave your home that evening, you would perhaps have met upon your road a young man in a blouse, searching amongst the heaps of rubbish near the houses and handsome shops which adorn the streets of Paris, and picking up the paper and rags which are thrown out in the evening. . . . You might have seen him, and have taken him for one of the lazy young vagrants who are led by idleness to adopt this miserable calling. But you would have been greatly mistaken. For this young man was Louis. It had been at no little cost to his self-love, but he trampled this under foot, and remem-

* The *patronage* is a house where the members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul receive a certain number of apprentices and young workmen every Sunday.

bering that nothing is shameful or humiliating excepting that which offends God, he set himself diligently to work.

And God had blessed his honest efforts, and had given him an abundant harvest, and thus the means to provide bread for his starving family. And thus the boy returned home happily, and if any feeling of shame ever rose in his mind at the remembrance of that night of humiliation, it should have found no place within his breast. He had ministered to his father, and comforted his mother; and I would only wish that all his life might be as noble as that night of deep distress, and could I see the blouse that covered him, and the old rags that he collected, I would regard them as a badge of honour bravely won.

FIRST COMMUNION.

NAPOLEON I. was talking familiarly one day with many of his illustrious companions in arms. They were all discussing which had been the happiest day of their lives, and one after another they named those battles synonymous throughout the world with honour and glory—Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, and Wagram. The Emperor had grown thoughtful, and had ceased to join in the conversation. One of the officers present took the liberty of interrupting his reverie: "And you, sire," he asked, "which has been the happiest day of your life? Amongst so many triumphal days, your Majesty is doubtless troubled to choose." "The happiest day of my life," replied the great Emperor in a serious voice, "was the day of my first Communion."

The Emperor was right. Next to the day of death, when the Christian is released for ever from the sorrows of life, and enters into a blissful eternity, the happiest day of life is undoubtedly the day of our first Communion. What happiness can be deeper, what joy more pure and sweet, than the happiness and joy of the child who draws near to the holy altar, with innocence in the soul, peace in the heart, and tears in the eyes? What memory can be compared to the memory of those days of preparation when we disposed ourselves by fervent prayers and by perfect good-will to receive Jesus our Blessed Lord for the first time into our hearts? Could anything ever equal the peaceful and deep emotion which filled our souls when

after having received absolution from the priest, we went to kneel down at our father's and mother's feet to ask them to give us their blessing and to forgive us for all our past offences. And our waking on that happy morning, so long expected ! and the unclouded splendour of that great religious solemnity in which we were with Jesus first of all ! and the beautiful canticles which will never cease to echo in our ears, and which seem to speak to us in the very depths of our hearts and whisper how much God loves us, and how truly we should love Him.

The first Communion is indeed a festival in which the whole family takes part. The blessing of God enters into the house with the dear little children all radiant with innocence. May that divine benediction ever rest upon their home ; and, in order to preserve it, parents should watch carefully over those little ones who are the angels of the house, that they may not lose that which renders them so dear to the Sacred Heart of Jesus ! Piety is not only the surety of the life that is to come, but is, moreover, the only guarantee of earthly happiness.

HAVE CONFIDENCE IN MARY.

WHILST I was at Rome, in 1845, I had the happiness of making the acquaintance of a good and holy priest named Don Biaggio. He had just succeeded as Superior of the Society of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood to the venerable founder of the Society, Gaspard del Bufalo, who had died in 1839, after a life which had been, not only holy and apostolic, but resplendent with the glory of miracles.

Amongst other wonders which Don Biaggio related to me, and of which he had been the eyewitness and sometimes even the happy instrument, the following would doubtless interest my readers. I will relate it, as far as possible, in his own words :—

“I was then twenty-three years of age,” he said to me, “and it was in the year 1814. Pius VII. had just returned in triumph to his beloved Rome. From my childhood I had desired to become a priest, but work and study had insensibly impaired my health. I had, nevertheless, been able to ascend the first steps of the sanctuary ; I was a

deacon. The disease of the lungs from which I suffered had now rapidly developed; I was subject to an intermittent fever, and the doctors spoke most seriously of my case. I did not deceive myself as to the decline of my health, and with the probability of an early death, I sought and obtained the favour of being ordained a priest one year before the canonical age. The fatigues of the examination and the retreat preparatory to my ordination exhausted the little strength which remained to me. I became seriously ill, and the doctors called in consultation informed me, after a careful examination, that I had reached the third degree of pulmonary consumption, that it was not possible I should recover, and that I had better make all necessary arrangements without delay. The Roman physicians are men of faith and do not follow the deplorable custom, prevalent in some countries, of letting people die without knowing that they are dying, and consequently without being able to prepare themselves to appear before God.

“I decided to go to Loretto and to die there under the eyes of the Blessed Virgin beneath the shadow of the *Santa Casa*. The voyage was painful, but for a dying man a little suffering more or less is of small consequence. Arrived at Loretto I dragged myself to the Holy House, fervently entreating the Madonna to assist me in my last agony. I had been there a few days; my illness was increasing; one morning when I was feeling weaker than usual, I went early to the sacred sanctuary of our Blessed Mother. According to my custom I knelt down for an instant, leaning against the wall. . . . A young priest whom I did not know, whom I had never seen, came and knelt down near me. We were alone, or almost alone. He then said in a low voice, as though speaking of me, but with his eyes fixed upon the miraculous Madonna: *Bisogna anchè che presto faccia la missione* (‘he also must give the mission.’) I looked at him; it was evident that he was speaking of me. Therefore, still upon my knees, I answered: ‘I would do so willingly if I could. . . . But I did not come here to preach, I am in consumption; I am come to die.’ ‘No, no,’ replied the priest with a bright smile; ‘let us have confidence in MARY!’ (*Abbiamo fede in MARIA*); and he added: *Dite meco un’ Ave Maria* (‘say an Ave Maria with me’). I repeated the an-

gical salutation with him, scarcely knowing what it all meant. . . .

“When we had finished, Gaspard del Bufalo (for it was he) rose, signed to me to follow him, and we went out together from the *Santa Casa* in silence. We crossed the great Basilica in which the Holy House of Nazareth is enclosed like a relic, and when we had reached the outer square, del Bufalo turned towards me with the look of one inspired. He told me that the Holy Father had entrusted to him the charge of giving a series of missions in this part in order to efface as far as possible the fatal effects of the Revolution, of Voltairianism, and of foreign occupation; that he desired to begin by Loretto in order to obtain the help and protection of the Blessed Virgin; but that he was still alone and needed companions. ‘You will come with me,’ he added with singular authority. ‘We will commence the mission to-morrow; you shall preach at such an hour, I at another;’ and there, upon the spot, he arranged the order of the services. I thought I was dreaming, I seemed to have been conscious of no kind of physical sensation, either during the Ave Maria, nor afterwards.

“Subjugated by a secret force, and confiding in Mary who can obtain everything from her Divine Son, I made no objection; and the following morning, God and our Blessed Lady helping me, I began to give a series of missions with the servant of God, which continued almost without interruption during twenty-three or twenty-four years, up to the time of his holy, happy death. From that day I have never been ill; nor felt my lungs in the least degree affected.”

Don Biaggio died also a few years after in the odour of sanctity. I received this account from his own lips. It was, he said, with these simple words: “Let us have confidence in MARY (*Abbiamo fede in MARIA*),” that the venerable Gaspard del Bufalo worked his greatest miracles.

OUR LADY OF VICTORIES.

OUR Lady of Victories is the name given to a church in Paris, situated or rather hidden in one of the most commercial, most stirring, and least Christian quarters of that

great town. This church, of very humble exterior, was even unknown to the Parisians themselves before the year 1836. It was certainly a parish church, but one without parishioners; and notwithstanding the efforts of good and earnest priests, not one man in the congregation fulfilled his Easter duties, no one ever came to the High Mass; and not more than fifteen or twenty women, out of seventeen thousand inhabitants, approached the Sacraments!

To-day this little church is known throughout the world. Its very name causes Catholic hearts to beat, and that not only in France, but throughout Europe, in America, in Africa, and in those far-off islands where our missionaries carry the Faith. Our Lady of Victories is a great religious centre for all pious souls in Paris and in the provinces, its nave is always full of fervent worshippers, and the church is so crowded that it is necessary to come a long time before the service in order to find a place.

What could have happened to effect so complete a change in such a few years? Listen, for the finger of God is there. The good curé of our Lady of Victories, M. Desgenette, a man of eighty years of age, had had the charge of this unhappy parish during four years. Seeing that all his efforts to convert the souls entrusted by Providence to his care, had been utterly useless, and in his humility attributing this want of success to his own unworthiness, he had been thinking for some time of resigning his mission into the hands of the Archbishop of Paris. One day, in the month of December, he commenced the Mass under the impression of this thought. An unusual disquietude oppressed his soul, so much so that on reading the *Sanctus* he was obliged to stop to arouse himself effectually from his preoccupation and to collect his thoughts. Whilst he was thus seeking to gain peace within, no one being near him, a clear distinct voice suddenly spoke these words: "Consecrate thy church and parish to the most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary!" The poor priest, utterly bewildered, took the voice for a delusion of his troubled senses. "I am not only an unworthy curé," he said to himself, groaning in spirit, "but now I am losing my senses and am going mad. I must hesitate no longer, but must give up my mission without more delay." And a little reassured by this determination, he ended the holy Mass with calmness.

His thanksgiving was longer than usual. His trouble and preoccupation returned to him anew, and he strengthened himself in his determination to resign a charge of which he believed himself so evidently unworthy. He was kneeling alone in the choir. He was about to rise to return home and write at once to the Archbishop, when the same voice echoed in his ears once more, saying to him in accents of majesty and command: "Consecrate thy church and parish to the most Holy and Immaculate Heart of MARY!"

The holy priest, moved to the depths of his soul, could no longer doubt the reality of what had happened to him. He prostrated and humiliated himself, asked help from God, and invoked, in order to know what he must do, the *most Holy and Immaculate Heart of MARY*, to which he had never had recourse until then, and of which he had spoken, as he afterwards acknowledged with simplicity, as a singular devotion, impracticable and useless. After all, he said to himself, I may as well try.

And he did indeed try. Returning home, he wrote with a facility he had never before experienced, the rules of a confraternity of Our Lady of Victories, in honour of the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of MARY. Wholly astonished himself at the strange rapidity with which he had been able to accomplish this work, he carried it to Mgr. de Guélen of holy and revered memory, then Archbishop of Paris. He read the statutes, and not only authorised the curé to establish his new confraternity, but even insisted upon his doing so in the most imperative manner.

"You will commence next Sunday," he added. It was then Friday.

On the Sunday, the good curé ascended the pulpit at the time of the sermon, and looking down upon his deserted church, announced to the few women who composed his auditory, that that very evening the meetings and religious services of the Confraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary would commence in that church. . . .

On coming down from the pulpit, he was stopped by a man whom he had not seen when he went up, and who asked him when he could receive his confession? He was a rich merchant of the parish, with whom the curé was acquainted, but who never came to church. The good priest could but regard this unhoped-for conversion as a

sign from God to give him confidence, and to prove to him that his work came to him from heaven.

That evening when the curé, full of apprehension, entered his poor church, he was stupefied at seeing it filled with men, women, and young people in greater numbers than at any previous solemnity. He gave an instruction which was followed by the singing of the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. When they reached the invocation so dear to our hearts: *Refugium peccatorum, ora pro nobis!* (Refuge of sinners, pray for us), an involuntary and supernatural emotion took possession of the whole assembly, who unanimously repeated three times over as one great cry of confidence and repentance: *Refugium peccatorum, ora pro nobis.* The curé, himself overcome by heartfelt emotion, admired the goodness of God, who thus changes the hearts and attracts the souls of men.

The Blessed Virgin, the Refuge of sinners and the Mother of mercy, had made choice of a new sanctuary upon earth from which to shed over France and the whole world the graces of her Divine Son. The Confraternity (since become an arch-confraternity) of our Lady of Victories was founded, and from that day, not a month, not a week has passed without wonders of every description, sudden conversions of hardened sinners, evidently miraculous cures, graces of all kinds being sent to prove to the world that the arm of God is not shortened, and that the Blessed Virgin is always our Mother.

More than three millions of the faithful, with our Holy Father Pope Pius IX. at their head, are inscribed in the ranks of this admirable arch-confraternity, and wear upon their breast, as a sign of gratitude and love, the medal named the *Miraculous Medal*, on account of the signal graces of which it has been the instrument. . . .

In France, where this devotion first took root, much love and reverence are paid to the medal and sanctuary of our Lady of Victories; but what can be said for England, the country which stands so much in need of grace, yet has no faith in Mary's prayers, no love for her who is so dear to the Sacred Heart of Jesus?

In a time of darkness and temptation England lost the gift which God Himself had given nearly a thousand years

before—the gift which is the most precious He can bestow upon His redeemed children, viz., the light of the one true faith. Then, for the first time, the people, bewildered and deceived by all manner of strange and contradictory doctrines, turned away from Mary, and would no longer acknowledge the Mother of God to be their Mother and their Queen. Then they learned to hate what they had loved, to despise what they had honoured, and to traduce the teaching they had revered and believed.

But now, after more than three hundred years, a marked and undeniable change is going on. Just as sometimes, in the early morning, we may see the heavy mist rising gradually from the earth and the daylight stealing softly and almost imperceptibly over the land, so may we see with thankfulness that the thick mist of prejudice and bigotry is gradually passing away, and that the light of a fairer judgment and a truer knowledge is filling the hearts and minds of the English people. We can scarcely take up a book or a newspaper worthy of notice without perceiving that a strenuous and almost universal effort is being made to be honest and impartial, and to abstain most carefully from the false assertions and virulent accusations which disgraced our literature in years gone by.

Moreover, it is certain that the country, as a nation, is seeking after God. Many, it is true, led astray by the pride of unbelief, have plunged into shadows more terrible and dangerous than the dim light of the unsatisfying faith which had been theirs from childhood; but there are also many, nay hundreds, of English men and English women who are coming, year by year, to swell the world-wide ranks of the eternal Church of God, the Church of the Saints, the Church of their forefathers, *built upon a rock*.

And to these last, especially perhaps in the first rush of joy and gratitude for the light that has lightened their darkness, there comes an intense desire to gain an equal blessing for their friends and for the land in which they live.

Now, there is one thing all good Catholics may do for England every day, and it is this: they may commend their country to prayers that never grow cold, to a love

that never grows weary, to a faith that can never grow tired ; when the present seems dark and the future unpromising, and the number of God's faithful children comparatively small, then cast away all doubt and sadness, look up to heaven and *behold thy Mother*. Her heart is full of love, her hands are clasped in ceaseless prayer ; she is so near and dear to JESUS—therefore with hope and confidence, with joy and gratitude, confide all the friends whom you love and the land of your birth to the HOLY and IMMACULATE HEART of MARY.

THE END.







SEGUR, L.G. de.	BQ
Familiar instructions.	7112
	.E33
	F3
DATE	ISSUED TO
	v.2

SEGUR, L.G. de.	BQ
Familiar instructions.	7112
	.E33
	F3
	v.2.

